

The 2012 Advent Calendar

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DAY 1 - Kitchen Tools – Mandolin & Zucchini Pasta Primavera

Hello and welcome to this year's Advent Calendar. Through the next 24 days, I will share with you tips, recipes, thoughts and inspirations to help you through what most people would find the most difficult month in which to diet. At Food-Wise however, we think this is the best month because you will learn so many tricks that will change how you prepare, cook and view all kinds of foods.

The Mandolin

Today, I would like to discuss one kitchen tool that has been around for a long time but that many replace by an electric alternative... the tool I'm talking about is the mandolin... not the instrument but the vegetable slicer!

I bought mine about 12 years ago at a home show... the guy was demonstrating it's magic and his kiosk was filled with cut up vegetables of all kinds. I was really impressed and thought it would save me so much time... and I was right except for the fact that I didn't eat very many vegetables so in fact, the tool stayed right in the cupboard in its wonderful custom made stand/case and never got used. That is of course, until I started looking at vegetables in a whole new way...

By the way, there are mandolins of all types and prices so please be vigilant when choosing yours. The first tip is to select one that has a "V" shaped blade. The slanted single ones don't tend to work as well especially when you get into thicker slices. The one I purchased was made before they started making those with adjustable dials that allow you to select from a very thin slice to a quite thick one. Mine only offers two options in terms of thickness for the straight slice. I have to tell you though that after a good 8 years of constant use, it is still as sharp as the day I got it. Mainly, what dulls the blades on any knife is the fat that accumulates when cutting meat. Since your mandolin will only ever be used for vegetables, this will not be a problem and the blades will stay nice and sharp.

So what do you do with a mandolin... my number one use is slicing onions. There are two reasons for this, first because the job gets done quickly which means truly "no more tears"! Second, because I have a hard time digesting raw onions I can select the very thin slices that are much easier to digest... especially if they are in a lemon dressing. Lemon has a way of "cooking" food without heat and without bringing the sugars out.

But what other uses can you get out of your mandolin... watch the following video for additional ideas...<http://youtu.be/3cnsFjp8UXU><http://youtu.be/MM8lCfngK0o> .

I wasn't able to find a video of the "trick" the kiosk man showed us... which is to "slice" off the bumps all around the stem of the bell peppers which ends up releasing the stem while still attached to the core and the seeds. You save the bumps because they are good but throw out the seeds and without the aid of another knife, you have cored the pepper and can now slice into beautiful ringlets!

The other thing I do is "spaghettini" from zucchini. For this, I cut the ends off the zuke and slice lengthwise using the small julienne blade. I get long strands of zucchini which, when tossed in the non-stick pan with a bit of Pam start looking more and more like reheated Chinese food. Add some celery, mushrooms, cubed chicken and a bit of soya sauce and there you have it.

Zucchini Pasta Primavera

Somebody else seemed to think this was a good idea because I found this recipe on the web and wanted to share it with you.

Difficulty: Easy
Ideal Protein: Phases 1, 2, 3, and 4
Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 3-4 zucchinis (or 4 cups of thin zucchini strips)
- 4 cups of sliced red peppers, sliced mushrooms, and spinach.
- 4 teaspoons [basil pesto grapeseed oil](#)

(this adds a touch of WOW!)

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- salt and black pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Cut zucchini into thin, noodle-like strips using a mandolin or potato peeler. Toss with 1 teaspoon salt, and place in a colander to drain for 30 minutes.
2. Bring a pot of water to boil. Add zucchini and cook for one minute. Drain and rinse immediately with cold water to stop cooking.
3. Heat basil pesto grapeseed oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add peppers and mushrooms and saute for 5 minutes. Add zucchini and garlic followed by spinach; cook and stir until just tender, about 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Add your favorite protein.

If you don't want to invest in the specialty grape seed oil, I suspect you can make your own by using a bit of oil and letting basil "marinate" in it for a few days.

Phase 4 tip...

Now that you can eat all the vegetables, think of the possibilities that open up with a mandolin. Some of the uses you may not have thought of is removing the corn off the cob, making oven fries, and cutting up fruits too! Have you ever noticed at the buffet style restaurants, they have a knack for cutting melons into slices that are all even... now you know how!

Finally, I did some spot checking for places to get one of these. I know they are available at places like Stokes, Think Kitchen and Bed, Bath and Beyond. But I also found them on [Amazon.ca](#). In fact, they have the very one I bought 12 years ago... for \$39.99!

On a final note, nowadays, you can almost always find my mandolin in the dish rack in the sink... it's not worth putting away... that's how often we use it!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 2 - Herbs and Spices – What goes with what?

Good afternoon everyone, today I wanted to talk about the stuff that makes things taste good! When people start on a weight loss journey they often find that foods taste bland and they start missing the flavours of their old style of eating.

Flavour drivers!

Most people attribute the lack of flavour to the fact that they are eating diet food... not so! I have told some of you during our weekly coaching sessions but maybe not everyone knows. Flavour in foods occurs through two mediums. The first and most common one is fat. Think of it as a flavour conductor. It coats the inside of the mouth and makes every mouthful an explosion of tastes. The second one and the most challenging one is herbs and spices. This is the one that requires knowledge and finesse...

As a French Canadian, I was brought up like most, I am sure, with our spice rack being limited to: salt, pepper, onion salt, seasoning salt and Accent. At Christmas time, there would be some new flavours like cloves for the ham and cinnamon and other spices in the home-baked goods. We didn't know what curry was good for, or cardamom or cumin or turmeric and so, as a result, we didn't use them.

Let me tell you about some spices... Did you know that Turmeric, used and produced by such countries as India and other middle eastern countries, has what appears to be very positive repercussions on our health. According to Can-Alt labs, who have performed some 2000 studies on hair samples, there is a link to be made between this spice and a decrease in certain cancers. For example, they found a 20 fold decrease in prostate cancer for men, an 8 fold decrease in colon cancer, a 10 fold decrease in kidney cancer, an 8 fold decrease in bladder cancer and a 7 fold reduction in lung cancer. Do you realize that in India, the air pollution outranks that of 132 countries. According to a recent [New York Times article](#) "India has the worst air pollution in the entire world" and yet they have lower rates of lung cancer... because of turmeric? Very possibly! Turmeric also has been shown to lower inflammation and lower risks of Alzheimer's.

So what do we do with Turmeric? Use it with salmon! When you search the Internet for recipes, the combination of Salmon and Turmeric is the most popular one to be found. Of course there are many that use ingredients that we are not allowed on Phase 1-3 (i.e. coconut milk) but there is one that is super easy which only involves a tiny bit of oil to allow the Turmeric to rub and stick to the salmon. Visit the Yankee Cook's site for the [Grilled Turmeric Salmon](#) recipe.

Tell me more...

As a side note, I can't brag about having learned all there is to learn about cooking with spices. I remember a friend from long ago who would look at a piece of meat and open up the spice cupboard to hunt for the "right" spice to go with it. He would open jar after jar, smell and put back or smell and say "ahh, this will be terrific!". I don't have that ability yet, plus Peter does most of the cooking at home so the likelihood is that it will take years to develop. If you are like me but want to know more... here are a few tips:

1) Get a book! Just like recipes, there are books with the sole purpose of showing you about spices. I dug one up for you (which I have also ordered for myself...) which I think does exactly what we need which is tell us what it's good for, what it's good with, and how to use it! Here is the link to the book called [Herbs and Spices by Jill Norman](#) available on Amazon.ca. This might be a great gift to give someone... or to ask for!

2) Find recipes where the chef has already done the homework! There are tons of recipes some of

which you already have at home in your collection of books from previous weight loss programs. These recipes may need to be adjusted to make sure they contain none of the forbidden ingredients but I trust you to do that with ease.

3) Get the Ideal Protein "My Ideal Recipes" book by Chef Dan Verati. He is a Cordon Bleu chef who designed this book precisely for Phase 1 - 3 dieters. All the recipes are worthy of a five star restaurant and have the bonus feature of containing exactly 4 portions of both the 8 oz of meat and the 2 cups of vegetables required for the evening meal. The recipes are easy to make and provide some leftovers which you can freeze. *You can order this book directly on our Online Ordering System.*

4) Finally, in a pinch, you can pick up these wonderful new little packs made by Club House called "[Recipe Inspirations](#)". There is a recipe on the back and the bubble pack contains all the spices required to make the recipe. Even if you need to adjust the recipe, you will hold in one hand all that you need. And if you like the result, you can then go out and buy the bottles to relive the experience at a later date. Knowing that spices are not cheap, it's nice to try them out before committing to an entire bottle!

Phase 4 tip...

You guys truly have the world at your feet. There are so many recipes for you to make it's a thrill to search the net for them. I found this one site that offered both [recipes and videos](#) in the form of a cooking class. This is a great way to learn about spices both for your health and your taste buds!

So here's a piece of interesting fact. Did you know that in many countries, chocolate recipes include chilli powder as a way to enhance the taste of the chocolate? Maybe you did, but did you also know that in many countries, cocoa powder is added to chilli recipes to enhance the taste of the spice? Huh!

Tomorrow, we start another week, which means that today, you should ensure that the fridge is full, the vegetables are bought and you have meat at the ready. The week days during December are particularly rushed because we try and fit so much in just to make sure we get to Christmas on time! Have a great afternoon, à demain!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 3 - Sugar as a depressant... What you want to know!

Today, I would like to talk about anti-depressants... and things that work directly against them to sabotage their effect! In our society, there is no doubt that the amount of stress coming our way is at an all-time high. The rates of depression, of suicides, of burnouts are consistently on the rise with no respite in site! Ever wonder why that is? I do!

When we met for the first time, we shared with you how the amount of sugar consumed on a yearly basis by the average north-American has gone from 5 lbs to over 150 lbs in the last 100 years! Do you think that maybe there is a correlation? Well you don't have to wonder anymore, I can confirm that there definitely is!

So on the one hand, people visit their doctors looking for a remedy for depression, lack of energy, lack of sleep and mood swings and on the other hand, our society overwhelms us with the flavour of the month at the coffee house of your choice. The problem is that while anti-depressants are potent remedies that work to fix the problems, sugar is the antidote that works entirely as a depressant!

Sugar Blues!

One of our clients who did the program well over a year ago read this book and suggested it to me. The things I learned, through this book, helped me, both as a sugar addict and as a weight loss coach, make sense of the impact of sugar on our bodies, our moods, our mental health... so that in the end, it's not just about weight loss or weight gain, it's about nasty side effects!

For your benefit, I looked up the book (called the Sugar Blues by William Duffy) and found this [excerpt](#)... Reading the book will have almost the same impact as watching the movie "Super Size Me"... The way you perceive sugar will be changed forever!

You know, for over 40 years, I thought sugar was my friend which is why I maintained a very "A-List" relationship with it... but in the end, I realized it wasn't my friend at all as it contributed to some highly undesirable side effects, the worst of which is the FOG! This is the state that quickly follows the period of clarity that immediately happens upon consumption of sugar. First you get amazingly clear, life makes sense and you seem to have it all figured out... then shortly, you feel the fog creep in. That is when your brain tries to convince you that if you eat more sugar, you will regain the lost clarity! Do you see the vicious cycle occurring? The following is a quick review of the book by a guy from NYC

A true health classic! February 3, 2000

I'm sugar-free ever since reading "Sugar Blues." I was sluggish, moody, hungry, etc. I remembered that John Lennon mentioned Duffy's book in an interview once. So I bought it at the local health food store. He starts off with his own sugar hell and redemption and then delves into the whole history of the cane. Very interesting, health-wise and also politically. This is the meat of the book. (The Boston "Tea" Party? More like the rum party.) I like his writing style; he keeps it homespun. (Why did some think this book needs more "hard science"? Isn't it already in there? It's not intended to be in a medical journal [which can't always be trusted!].) When I tell people I'm sugar-free they usually scoff, saying sugar's not that bad for you, why give it up completely. Well, now I wake up clear and I get through the afternoon w/o any flagging of energy. At various times of the day I'll feel some energy racing through my body. (A great feeling; keeps me motivated.) Now I need less food on my plate, and my hypoglycemia has all but disappeared. (Think about THAT one, folks.) Never eat "refined sucrose" again! It can be done! Sky's the limit! Thank you, William Duffy!

If you are interested in reading the book for yourself, let me know, I have a copy to lend. Just ask me for it... ;-)

Tell me more...

So, do you wonder if you're a sugar addict? Take a minute to ask yourself these questions... And please note that you may substitute the word sugar for any of the following: bread, pasta, rice, fruit, potatoes, alcoholic beverages, sodas, chocolate... you get the picture... they are all forms of sugar!

- 1) *Have you ever tried to cut down or control your use of sweet foods?*
- 2) *Are you using more sweet foods than ever before?*
- 3) *If you don't have your regular "dose" of sugar, do you get irritable and cranky?*
- 4) *Have you ever gotten upset when someone ate your special food?*
- 5) *Have you ever lied about how much sweet food you eat?*
- 6) *Have you ever gone out of your way to get something sweet?*
- 7) *Have you ever binged on sweet or white flour foods?*
- 8) *Have you ever felt you had a sugar hangover?*
- 9) *Is it impossible to "just say no" to sweet foods?*
- 10) *Is sugar controlling your life?*

If you have answered yes to two or more of the above questions, you may well be a sugar addict and if you are, you need to include this knowledge in your weight loss journey to insure lasting results.

Please note that the above questions are taken from a book called The Sugar Addict's Total Recovery Program by KathleenDesMaisons. There is also a website called [Rational Recovery](#) that you might want to visit as it gives a crash course on AVRT - Addicted Voice Recognition Technique. This in itself is a real eye opener because whether you are addicted to sugar or other substances, the addicted voice is the same!

Phase 4 tip...

As you go from day to day on your maintenance journey, keep in mind that if you are addicted to sugar, those fun days take on a totally new meaning! Mine are as much fun as everyone else's but NEVER include sugar. I can have fun with many things including desserts but they are made with Splenda or other sugar substitute! This girl has learned her lesson... The only way to stay away from the sugar trap is to avoid it completely.

At the end of the day, if you realize that you are sugar addict don't let it bring you down. Chin-up, this little piece of information is more liberating than anything else you can learn... and worth more towards a sustainable weight loss than any money you could ever invest in actually losing weight! At least now, you can start to really work towards your goal with one more ace in your hand!

Have a great night, until tomorrow!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



PS, if you still haven't visited our Facebook, you are missing out on some awesome ideas for creating great food art. Check us out! [Facebook.com/foodwisewl](https://www.facebook.com/foodwisewl)

DAY 4 - Half full or half empty? The Power of Positive Thinking

The Eternal Optimist... this is the name that I sometimes get called by those who know me. Have you ever noticed that I walk around with my sunglasses on my head even on a rainy day? In fact, I had them on all day today! I guess those people may be right in their choice of name for me as I do see things in a very positive way. I'm not even sure how I learned to do that... but the reality is that, if I could learn how, so can YOU!

What are the advantages of seeing things in a positive light? Well, for starters, it makes you feel like you are in control... like you are the one who decides. For example, just like the rest of you I have days where everything seems to be going wrong. That is usually when I go to a place where I can be alone (because people would think I was cocoo otherwise...) and I say as loud as I can "OK that's enough! Things are going right from now on! Well, whomever I am saying it to must be listening because at that point, things do indeed start going right and I start getting what I need which, more often than not, are green lights instead of red ones...! ;-)

What other advantages are there to being positive? Ah yes, when I am positive, people want to be near me. Let's be honest, nobody wants to hang out with people who are grumpy and who complain about everything. There is enough of that in the world already. In fact, anywhere you go, just listen and you can hear people complaining about the weather, the state of the economy, the food, their jobs, their family, their spouse, their kids... it never stops! Well it can, but it's up to everyone to do their part.

I wanted to share with you something that I received as part of a coaching program that I enrolled in a few years ago. Not surprisingly it was called Miracles Coaching... At any rate, this piece was originally published in 1912 in a book titled **Your Forces and How to Use Them**, this famous creed by **Christian D. Larson** is worth reading every morning and evening.

You might think it to be outdated... well it is not. There is a lot to learn from this one text and, for this reason, I chose to put it in English and French, so that all my readers would have this important tool in their own language. It is called the Optimist Creed and I challenge you to print a copy and put it beside your bed so that you can make reading it a part of your daily routine. See the difference it makes for you!

The Optimist Creed / Le crédo de l'optimiste

(le français suit)

PROMISE YOURSELF...

- 1- To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
- 2- To talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet.
- 3- To make all your friends feel that there is something worthwhile in them.
- 4- To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
- 5- To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best.
- 6- To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
- 7- To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
- 8- To wear a cheerful expression at all times and give a smile to every living creature you meet.
- 9- To give so much time to improving yourself that you have not time to criticize others.
- 10- To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.
- 11- To think well of yourself and to proclaim this fact to the world, not in loud word, but in great deeds.

12- To live in the faith that the whole world is on your side, so long as you are true to the best that is in you.

www.miraclescoaching.com

JE PROMETS :

- 1 - D'être fort au point que rien ne puisse troubler ma sérénité d'esprit;
- 2 - De parler de santé, de bonheur et de prospérité à toute personne que je rencontrerai;
- 3 - D'inculquer à mes amis la confiance en eux-mêmes;
- 4 - De ne considérer que le bon côté des choses en véritable optimiste;
- 5 - De ne songer qu'au mieux, de ne travailler que pour le mieux et de n'espérer que le mieux;
- 6 - De manifester autant d'enthousiasme pour les succès des autres que pour les miens;
- 7 - D'oublier les erreurs passées et de voir à faire mieux à l'avenir;
- 8 - D'avoir toujours l'air joyeux et de sourire à toute personne que je rencontrerai;
- 9 - De consacrer tant de temps à m'améliorer moi-même que je n'aurai pas le temps de critiquer les autres;
- 10 - D'être trop bienveillant pour me tracasser, trop noble pour m'irriter, trop fort pour craindre et trop heureux pour me laisser troubler;
- 11 - D'avoir une bonne opinion de moi-même et de le proclamer à la face du monde, non pas avec des mots, mais avec de grandes gestes;
- 12 - De vivre en croyant fermement que le monde sera de mon côté tant que je vivrai conformément à ce qu'il y a de meilleur en moi.

Phase 4 tip...

To you I say that the strongest negative feeling that you are likely to experience as a graduated dieter, the one feeling that will rob you of your full potential is fear. Fear of what you say? Fear of loosing your self-control and finding yourself slowly going back to your old eating habits and seeing the weight creep back on.

I recommend that you trust yourself! Love yourself enough to recognize your behaviour and call it like it is. Say out loud, "I am in better control!" "I know what to do!" Don't say it as if it were the equivalent of pressing the panic button on your car remote. Say it with conviction and believe that you are indeed different and better. Remember all the things you learned while on the program... you can sometimes forget things you have learned but you cannot unlearn them! ... and if you need someone to remind you drop me a line! ;-)

In the end, the more you see the glass half full, the more likely you are to see it fill right to the brim... and even overflow! I know that every day that I spend with you, my heart fills with new experiences, new appreciation and new love. I am so grateful to have you all in my life... how could I possibly be anything less than positive.

Thank you for your time, have a great night, until tomorrow!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 5 - Something to sink your teeth into... Green Bean Salad

Today, I wanted to give you a quick recipe because I know that at this time of year we are more pressed for time and we are also looking for something new because we are in a festive mood and are looking for food to match... We also participate in more collective meals at work so here is a salad recipe that tastes great and will make you look good! Don't you just love it when people ask you for the recipe... it makes your efforts even more worthwhile!

Green bean salad

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 lb green beans (fresh or canned) (Fresh is better but takes more time...)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, smashed
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- pepper
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts (for phase 4)

Directions:

1. Cook cut green beans in boiling water, if fresh, 5 minutes till tender crisp. If using canned, just drain. Drain beans and rinse in cold water.
2. Combine fresh lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, basil, salt and pepper in a small bowl; stir well with a whisk.
3. Combine green beans with the tomatoes and toss with the vinaigrette.
4. If you are in Phase 4, add pine nuts just before serving.

Phase 4 tip...

I don't know how well you are acquainted with pine nuts (*pignons on français*) but I discovered these about 12 years ago through my sister-in-law. If you want to take a salad from great to WOW... add pine nuts. Actually, add roasted pine nuts... but roast them yourself.

How do you do that? Easy (it's gotta be easy for me to try it because I don't have that much time...)! Take 1/3 cup of pine nuts, put them in a non-stick frying pan and turn the heat to med-high. Keep moving them around every minute or so to avoid burning. When they are toasted, put them on a paper napkin to avoid condensation and let cool. Add them to your salads and increase the wow factor in one fell swoop!

This salad is both tasty and festive looking. I know it takes up one of your restricted vegetables for the week but it is definitely better than other buffet alternatives! You can also bring the pine nuts in a separate container and add them for other after you have taken your portion...

Have a great night, tomorrow, the weeks starts winding down!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 6 - Are you a right brain or left brain dominant person? + Big Mac in a Bowl

I learned about such a notion about seven years ago while attending a conference in Halifax and it literally saved my relationship with my then, teenage daughter! She, being the youngest of my two children, left me totally perplexed in the way she thought and acted. I remember that when they were both young, I could say to my 4 year old son: "sweetie can you go upstairs in my bedroom and look into the brown clothes basket and bring me my blue sweater?", and boom in less than three minutes he was back with the sweater in hand and a big grin on his face. By contrast, my daughter, at the same age, with the same instructions would leave and likely not return. I might find her fifteen minutes later doing a craft because the thought had come into her mind on the way to the basket, or more likely, I would find her in my room crying with no sweater in sight. What a difference... and I didn't understand! I knew she was smart, no question about that but I couldn't figure out why this would happen... every time! It took me more than ten years before the answer was given to me.

Right brain dominant people are these amazing folks who can tap into their creative minds and come up with the most intricate results and beautiful conceptions. The way their brain is wired is incredible because they live "the moment" more intensely than those who are left brain dominant. That totally describes my daughter!

Here is a comparison of the two.

Right brain

Lives in the present moment - Right here, right now!

Thinks in pictures - Big collage of energy that defines what things look like, smell like, taste like, feel like and sound like.

Learns kinaesthetically.

We are energy beings connected to other energy beings - a big family

Left brain

Past and future events make up a big collage from which details are associated to the past and projected into the future; all are possibilities.

Thinks in language - ongoing chatter that connects "me" and "my internal world" to "my external world" - The little voice inside that reminds you to pick-up vitamins for tomorrow morning.

Left brain says "I am" which separates me from the rest of you.

Now let me say this, most people are middle-brainers; who can tap both sides. Few are extreme one side or the other but you may recognize yourself in some of the characteristics shown here. Let me also say that most children start out using their right brain more than their left and then develop the use of the other side. You will not often find a 4 year old with an agenda, waiting by the door because YOU are late! Regardless of whether you are a right brain thinker or a left brain thinker, you can train the one side of the brain to "back-off" and give the other side a chance. If you want to learn more about this notion, check out this video?http://www.ted.com/talks/jill_bolte_taylor_s_powerful_stroke_of_insight.html

OK, so what does it have to do with food habits? Well you see people who are creative and live in the moment can look in the fridge and come up with an amazing creation... **if they have the time**, but in today's reality where our watch is the driver, it is very difficult to operate this way (regardless of which side of the brain you think from!!!). The healthy "fast" foods are not as well known as the ones with the drive-thru windows. Healthy, low-fat, and especially low-carb requires some planning!

Also, people who are right brain thinkers may think "I am definitely going on a diet"... right at the moment when they are being unsuccessful at getting into last season's prized power suit. That is what

they are thinking in THAT moment and they couldn't be more serious and more sure of anything... but then later, when they find themselves in a social setting (not remembering the earlier episode with the power suit) all notion of a diet is forgotten and out the window. Now, this can be totally frustrating when you don't understand why, in one moment, you can have the iron strength will then have it be gone totally in the next moment.

So how can you improve your chances of success as a right brain or left brain? Use some of the same tools that help get you through your job successfully, a calendar/planner and a team! On its own a calendar can help you keep moments past and future in the **present**. You don't know what to eat tonight?... check out a previous page to remember something that you ate a few weeks ago that tasted ohhh sooo good but that you have now forgotten about. Always keep in mind that you are trying to overwrite many years of "no time = drive thru" programming! Keep a few staples in your fridge... I would bet my house on my ability to whip up an omelette dinner faster than anyone can get in their car and return home with a fast-food dinner. Looking for a portable dinner to eat in the car on the way to the soccer game? Try this Big Mac in a bowl (Phase I compatible) the recipe was given to me by none other than my own daughter!!!

Big Mac in a bowl (no cheese)

- * 8 ounces cooked ground beef
- * Salt and pepper, to taste
- * 1 teaspoon minced dry onions
- * 46 grams dill pickle slices or 2 dill spears, chopped, about 1 5/8 ounces
- * 2 tablespoons WF Thousand Island Dressing
- * 1 1/2 ounces iceberg lettuce, shredded

Brown the ground beef, drain off any fat, season with salt and pepper.. Meanwhile, soak the dry onions in a little water to rehydrate them. Put the meat in a large salad bowl and add the remaining ingredients. Toss and eat at once. Serves 1

Phase 4 tip...

There is no reason why you can't take the above and experiment a little. The idea is that when you get to phases 4, since there are no restrictions, it is easy to let old habits take hold again. Planning is even more important because you don't have the added incentive of having a coach to check-in with, on weekly basis.

So one fun day can turn into two, then three... and these days, you could find yourself at a mall tonight deciding that the lack of time will make today your fun day... but then tomorrow might be your office luncheon which would make it hard to do your recovery (Phase 1) day... then oops, you get invited out on Saturday and that ends up being three fun days in a row... See how easily it can happen! Start planning, or keep the healthy fast foods in your fridge to save you from unnecessary accumulation.

The bottom line here is that whether you are right brain dominant or left brain dominant, use your gifts/qualities to their full potential... and in the words of "Apple" if you need anything else, there's an "app for that"! Talk to your coach about it!

As usual, I am thinking about you and wish you a great day!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 7 - What are the rituals in your family? + Oatmeal Cookies

(Celle-ci vous arrive dans les deux langues... Le français suit)

Have you started your Christmas baking yet?

This week I was talking with one of you about the power of rituals in food management... Thank you for inspiring me to write about this.

Have you ever noticed how important rituals are? They anchor us to something solid, a part of our life that is known and trusted. We are surrounded with so much uncertainty, it is essential to have rituals. But have you ever taken a minute to see how food is such an important part of each ritual. Be it a football game (guys, you know what I mean!!) or a girls night out that starts with drinks and food, I can't think of one ritual that doesn't include food. We also do these routines with the kids where on the way to the Saturday morning Tae Kwon Do class, we stop at Tim's to get a box of doughnut holes. You only need to do it once to see the happy faces smiling back at you, and that is the motivator to do it again!... and again!!!

Let's look at a few other rituals... well Christmas is definitely a big one and it is timely that we should talk about it now. From the end of November to the day itself, we have little traditions that we have carefully developed over the years. In our family, we use to pick a Sunday afternoon at the beginning of December to do the Christmas tree. This was a great time for us to look at all the ornaments that we have gathered along the years and commemorate certain milestones. We always had a special snack or dessert to eat while we did this. Then a few days later, we would get into the Christmas baking. I must be thinking about this because of the snow flakes we saw earlier this week. I love to bake when it snows! How many recipes do you make? Does everyone in your family have a favourite? Of course, you want to make them happy so you will bake something for everyone.

Throughout the holiday season, be it when you do a shopping blitz or get invited to a get together not only will you be surrounded with food... but also the reminder that this only happens once a year. (Another powerful incentive to drop your program and cheat... just this once!) Of course it happens only once a year but food doesn't have to be the main focus. Let the special cookies stay pretty in the plate. Ask someone to describe how they taste and remind yourself that on Christmas day, while they are still stuffing their pie-hole, you will be collecting the compliments from your weight loss efforts. This may be the first Christmas where you don't suffer from heartburn or insomnia because your weight is making it difficult for you to breath properly.

Rituals are important. Try to look at them from a different angle. Invent new rituals that are healthier. Imagine the year that I declared being a sweet-aholic! That was the year my entire family made a special effort to change a lot of the rituals which are now, five years later, an integral part of our new and improved Christmas.

See below an IP Oatmeal Cookie recipe that you can enjoy AND remain faithful to the program!

Stay safe on the roads and enjoy the weekend.

Lise

Avez-vous commence la « popotte » des fêtes?

J'ai parlé cette semaine avec l'une d'entre vous du pouvoir des rituels dans la gestion de notre consommation de nourriture... Merci de m'avoir inspiré à rédiger ces quelques lignes.

Avez-vous déjà remarqué l'importance des rituels et des traditions? Ils ont la capacité de nous ancrer

à du solide, à une partie de notre vie qui est connue et qui inspire confiance. Nous sommes entourés de tellement d'incertitude et donc, il est important d'avoir ces rituels. Par contre, avez-vous remarqué combien la nourriture est une partie essentielle de tous les rituels? De la partie de football (les gars, vous savez très bien de quoi je parle!) à la sortie de filles qui débute dans un resto-bar avec des consommations et de la bouffe. Je ne peux même pas penser à un seul rituel qui n'inclut pas de la nourriture! En fait, on les invente de cette façon... même avec les enfants, en route le samedi matin à une classe de Tae Kwon Do, si on arrête chez Tim's pour ramasser une boîte de beignets une seule fois... le sourire sur leurs lèvres en dit long et nous motive à répéter l'expérience... encore et encore!

Examinons quelques autres rituels... prenons Noël, en voilà tout un, et c'est le temps d'en parler. De la fin novembre jusqu'au jour de Noël même, nous avons plusieurs petites traditions que nous avons développées au cours des années et que nous anticipons avec joie. Dans notre famille, nous avons le rituel de l'arbre de Noël que nous montions au début décembre, un bon dimanche après-midi. Ce moment était bien spécial car nous prenions le temps de regarder toutes les décorations que nous avons accumulées au fil des ans et nous en profitions pour célébrer les réalisations. Évidemment, nous avons un goûter spécial pour l'occasion. Quelques jours plus tard, on commençait la confection des biscuits et des galettes. Je suis certaine que les flocons de neige tombés plus tôt cette semaine m'y font penser aujourd'hui car j'adore faire à manger quand il neige! Combien de recettes faites-vous? Est-ce que chacun dans votre famille a sa recette préférée? Bien entendu, vous voulez faire plaisir à tout le monde alors vous les faites toutes...

Tout au long de la saison des fêtes, que ça soit des expéditions au centre d'achat ou des invitations chez des amis, vous serez non seulement entourés de nourriture... mais aussi du rappel que « ça arrive rien qu'une fois par année » (comme dit la chanson). C'est ça l'incitatif puissant qui vous encourage à céder... juste cette fois!!! Bien oui, c'est rien qu'une fois par année... à chaque année... mais la nourriture n'a pas besoin d'être le point focal principal. Laissez donc les beaux petits biscuits dans l'assiette. Demandez à quelqu'un de vous en décrire le goût tout en vous rappelant que le jour de Noël, pendant que les mêmes personnes ingurgiteront des quantités industrielles de nourriture, vous pourrez récolter tous les compliments que vous mériterez haut-la-main. Imaginez si cette année, vous pouviez enfin passer Noël sans brûlement d'estomac ou d'insomnie parce que votre poids vous empêche de bien respirer.

L'importance des rituels est indéniable. Essayez toutefois de les voir sous un nouveau jour. Inventez-en de nouveaux qui sont plus santé et tout aussi puissants. L'année où j'ai annoncé que j'étais « sucromanne », nous a forcé à changer une foulée de rituels et de traditions. Maintenant, cinq ans plus tard, avec l'effort collectif de tous, cette nouvelle façon de faire représente la nouvelle tradition améliorée chez les Hamilton-Carrière.

Je vous fais cadeau de la recette IP des galettes à la farine d'avoine. Une recette que vous pourrez apprécier en toute quiétude!

Soyez prudents sur les routes et bon week-end.

Lise

Oatmeal Cookies / Galettes à la farine d'avoine

Ingredients

2 packets of Ideal Protein Maple Oatmeal
1 large egg white
1 to 2 oz of water

Preparation

Beat egg then stir into oatmeal until mixed thoroughly. Add water to thin batter until spoonable - but not runny. Spoon onto a non-stick baking sheet and bake at 400 F (205 C) for about 10 min or until golden. Makes 4 to 6 cookies. Equals two protein servings - restricted.

Ingrédients

2 sachets de Gruau à l'Érable Idéal Protéine
1 blanc d'œuf (gros)
1 à 2 oz d'eau

Préparation

Battre le blanc d'œuf et l'incorporer au gruau. Bien mélanger. Ajouter doucement de l'eau jusqu'à ce que la consistance vous permette de déposer le mélange à la cuillère mais sans que ça coule. Déposer à la cuillère sur une tôle à biscuits non-adhésive. Cuire environ 10 minutes dans un four à 400 F (205 C) ou jusqu'à doré. Donne 4 à 6 biscuits. Vaut 2 portions de protéines retraits.

Phase 4 tip...

The year that I declared being a sweet-aholic, the last thing I wanted was to see our traditional recipes converted to Splenda. I was sure people would keep saying repeatedly "this doesn't taste the same!!... Well of course it doesn't... it's not made with sugar. So we decided to make new recipes that nobody had tasted before. They were a hit and are now part of our new repertoire. Thanks Mom for making the brownies for me! My suggestion to you is... find new recipes that you know will thrill your family and slowly incorporate them into the selection that is available during the holidays. Collect comments, this will be a great incentive to make them again next year... or replace them if they were not a hit.

L'année où je me suis déclarée sucromanne, la dernière chose que je voulais c'est voir nos bonnes vieilles recettes converties au Splenda! J'étais certaine que tout le monde dirait.. "ça goûte pas pareil!"... bien évidemment, c'est pas fait avec du sucre! Nous avons donc décidé de faire de nouvelles recettes que personne n'avait goûtées avant et qui maintenant font partie du nouveau répertoire des fêtes! Merci Mom de me faire des brownies!!! Ma suggestion pour vous est donc de trouver de nouvelles recettes et de commencer à les incorporer doucement dans votre sélection du temps des fêtes. Demandé aux gens ce qu'ils en pensent pour ajuster en conséquence l'an prochain.

Keep reading my emails. In a few days, I will give you a list of things that you and your family can do to take the focus off food during get togethers! ***** Continuez de lire mes courriels, dans quelques jours je vous donnerai des suggestions pour tirer le focus loin de la nourriture durant les rencontres de groupes!

Have a great weekend and drive safe! Bon week-end et conduisez prudemment!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 8 - Setting goals for a successful outcome...

Many of you know that Peter and I set out on a one week vacation today; our destination, Haliburton, Ontario. For those of you wondering, this is about 110 kms north of Peterborough. When I told some of you where we were going this week, many asked why we had not chosen a sunny destination instead. I explained simply that I couldn't be trusted to make the flight on time! Well, I can assure you that I was right in my self evaluation. I am happy to report that as I write this, Peter and I have reached our destination... and only 8 or so hours later than initially anticipated! This is what inspired me to write to you about expectations...

When you decide to undertake a journey, be it a trip, a business venture, a training or course... or (and I know you saw me coming here) a weight loss, you need to manage expectations. One of the key factors in setting goals and, by default expectations, is figuring out who holds most of the control. Like trump cards, control allows you to win tricks... There are many mitigating factors in any venture, some of which are controlled by us, some which are controlled by others and some... you guessed it, which are completely outside of anybody's control. The important thing here is to evaluate each factor fairly. Make a list of these factors and determine who holds control so that you can better manage expectations.

So let me tell you about today. I got up early because I had a lot of admin and coordinating work left to do to ensure continuous service in our absence. I got to work promptly at 6:45 am, in my pyjamas LOL, figuring I would get dressed when my work was caught up... Then noon rolled around and I started sweating a bit. My initial goal was to be on the road by 1:00 pm. Peter said to me, "we'll be lucky to be on the road by 3:00 pm",... and in the end, we left Ottawa at 5:30! I am very fortunate that Peter loves driving and the darkness is not a deterrent... There was the snow but we have winter tires on the Tiguan so I wasn't too concerned... Bottom line is that there was no point in getting upset or moody. We did the things that needed to be done and still managed to get away! (notice the eternal positive at work...!)

Peter brought his GPS along and programmed it to take us to our resort. I, on the other hand, had my trusted Smart Phone and wanted to see if it had the same route to suggest... and it did... but, it proposed that we would get there 34 minutes before Pete's GPS said we would! I had to laugh! It reminded me of a sales rule I learned many years ago... under promise, and over deliver... During the entire trip every 20 minutes or so, the GPS would shave off one minute from the expected time of arrival until finally, it offered the same ETA as the phone... This too reminded me of a weight loss journey and the difference between your scales and ours... how many pounds you have lost so far compared to my results...

Tell me more...

One of the first questions that everyone asks us is "how much can I expect to lose per week"? Sound familiar? "Well, it's hard to say", I tell them, there is an average that I often refer to but in the end, it has to do with how much control you have over, well the things that you do have control over. Let's make a list...

You have control over the following:

- The food you buy;
- The food you select in a restaurant menu;
- The amount of planning you put into each menu;
- The invitations you chose to accept and the ones you opt to decline;
- How you actually prepare your food.

Here is a list of things that you control much less:

- The demands made by others on your time;
- Your responsibilities towards your kids, your family, your employer;
- The chemistry in your brain (this is a big one...);
- The chemistry in your body and the speed of your metabolism;
- The number of people who participate in making your meals;
- Deadlines, departures times, fixed dates;
- Past experiences that either propel you or, more likely, hold you back...

The longer the list of things you don't have control over, the more you will need to manage your expectations. There is nothing on this list that cannot be negotiated to allow you increased control. The thing you must remember is that disappointment is a very powerful emotion, one you do not want or need because the negative aspect of this power can only serve to sabotage your efforts.

Have you ever noticed that the more you struggle to get somewhere on time, the likelier you are to be late? Take this lesson and apply it to everything you do including weight loss. I have seen so many clients fixate on a date... a deadline. They need to have lost their weight by a certain time! In the end, Que Sera Sera as the song says... and dates come and go. If you are a few pounds short of your goal by the set date, you're the only one who will know and if you start focussing on the weight you DID lose rather than the one you have left, you will find that the positive energy gives you wings! The best you can do is use tools, and just like a GPS it will take you right to your target... "You have arrived!"

Phase 4 tip...

The notion of managing expectations applies to you almost more than to the dieters. When people reach their goals, their perspectives change. Certainly, the goals change; now that the weight is gone, time holds a different level of importance. The urgency is gone and it is sometimes easy to think we are invincible. Don't fall in that trap! On the other hand, you may remember that we talked about how the body naturally wants to store fat as an "Emergency Plan". So if you gain 4 to 5 pounds in a year, it is not a failure. This is simply part of nature's plan. Take care of it while it is a small problem and then get back to your regular Phase 4 routine. Think of it as a yearly tune-up!

So from Haliburton, I will sign-off for tonight. My last thought is "mission accomplished"! We got here safely and I still managed to get this email out to you before today turned into tomorrow! We count our blessings and let go of the things that don't matter much in the grand scheme of things. I will remember this vacation and not the fact that we got here late. I will have a great vacation because I got all my work done before we left, and we prepared all that was possible for the people who will replace me. These are the things that matter!

Have a good night and sleep tight!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 9 - Finding ways to buy a little time... Crock Pot Beef and Peppers

Today is Sunday and it's a good day to get some stuff ready for the week... they are getting busier and busier as we approach December 25th. OR it's a good day to kick back, relax and get rested up to face the hustle and bustle of the next five days.

There are two popular beliefs when it comes to crock-pots and they are both myths rather than fact. The first one is that you use a crock-pot during the week when you don't have time to cook after work. Well, let me tell you that if you don't have time to cook at night, chances are that you won't have time to cook in the morning!!! The second belief is that crock-pots are made for families and that if you get a crock-pot as a single person, you should get a small one! Are you kidding? Repeats are what make a crock-pot the ideal tool for single people. The more left over you have the fewer times you will have to roll up your sleeves and "get crackin'"! No the bigger the crock-pot, the better it will serve you.

Let me tell you about Peter! When we moved in together, we were both working and I didn't have a crock-pot so we decided to get one after some friends of ours came to a party at our house and brought theirs with meatballs in it. We had all the same hopes as most people do and we had the same beliefs too. So we went and bought a good sized slow cooker and took it out of the box... then, used it maybe twice in the next 5 years! We couldn't find the time in the morning to get the thing going and on weekends, we didn't think of using it because we had time to cook which meant we used anything but the slow cooker... in our minds, that was a tool for during the week to save time... you get the picture!

Then one day, Peter retired and he took vow to keep me and the kids fed. But now that he was retired, he had time so, again, the, now dusty, crock-pot never even crossed our minds! As the weeks and months passed, I noticed that Peter would be less and less motivated to get dinner made and this was not by lack of desire, it was by lack of energy! It reminded me of something I had learned way back in the 80's about extroverted people. I am one so you can imagine my interest in the subject. The gist of it is that extroverted people are energized when they have people around. They draw their energy from others while introverted people are energized when they are alone. Having worked at the Translation Bureau allowed me to see first-hand what introverted people are like as many translators fit that category, (it's what makes them capable of doing what they do... for a long time!) Anyway, Peter, just like me, is extroverted, so when I was getting ready in the morning, he was happy to be up and about, to make my breakfast and yes, my lunch too... (I am spoiled, you need not tell me, the man is a saint!!!) but by 1:00 pm, the effects of my presence had worn off and his energy level was falling quickly and by 4:30 pm, he couldn't even think of what he would want to make for dinner. Enter the crock-pot!

For the next year we lived mostly on crock-pots! It allowed us to control what we were eating because instead of going to the store and getting something ready-made that contained all kinds of hidden sugars and preservatives, we made everything from scratch! Peter was making the dinners in the morning while he was still energized and by the time the afternoon rolled around, the smells in the house almost made him think that someone else had cooked dinner for him!

When the kids left home and we became a two person household, we went out and bought an even bigger crock-pot! The beauty of this one is that it allows us to put bigger pieces of meat that we can easily fish out to be weighed before adding the vegetables. Cubed meat is another association we make with crock-pots. We never get cubed meat because there is no way for us to know if we have the correct portion of protein. We usually get roasts, or large chicken breasts, or turkey breasts. We don't do whole chickens very often because they require a lot of work after the "work" is supposed to be done. They are also fatter and have the skin which we don't want.

Crock Pot Beef And Peppers

So you may have guessed it, today's recipe is for a crock-pot. By the way, you want to be careful when hunting on the Internet for these types of recipes. You can easily find crock-pot recipes, even low-carb ones BUT the low-carb community doesn't really agree on what is good for you and they often don't give a hoot about fat... SO read each recipe and make sure that all ingredients are Phase 1 approved and that the fat content is kept to a minimum.

Oh, yes, I almost forgot, in my search, I also found this great conversion chart for taking regular oven times and converting them to crock-pot equivalents... Pretty cool I dare say!

Oven cooking time // Crock pot cooking time

15 - 30 minutes // 1.5 - 2 hours with high heat or 4 - 6 hours with low heat

30 - 45 minutes // 2 - 3 hours with high heat or 5 - 8 hours with low heat

45 minutes to 2 hours // 4 - 5 hours with high heat or 8 - 15 hours on low heat

Crock Pot Beef And Peppers

3 to 4 lb Round steak lean
2 Green peppers sliced thin
1/2 cup onions minced
2 cup Beef broth
3 tbsp soy sauce
1/2 tsp Ground ginger
1 Garlic clove -- minced
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

Cut the steak into serving size pieces. If desired you can brown the meat in a little hot oil before adding to crock pot. Place the thinly sliced pepper rings in bottom of crock pot, reserving a few to place on top of meat if desired. Arrange the meat on pepper, careful to not stack one piece directly on top of another. Mix all other ingredients and pour over meat and peppers.

Cover and cook on low for 8-10 hours or on high for about 4 hours.
Serve with faux cauliflower potatoes.

Phase 4 tip...

It doesn't matter what phase you are on, time is universal and the commonality is that we all want/need more of it. A crock-pot will help you to get dinner on the table. In phase 4, you don't want low-carb, you want SLOW carbs. So take this into consideration when looking for a recipe. Remember that you are aiming for low-fat with your slow carb. Here's a site that offers great healthy recipes that made my mouth water even right after breakfast... enjoy!

<http://recipes.prevention.com/Recipes/SearchResults.aspx?kw=slow+cooker+low+fat>

Well the sun is shining this morning and we are off for some visits today with friends and family. Here is the view from our patio door. Hope you have a great Sunday! Love to all.

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



* * * * *

DAY 10 - Saying thank you with the right message!

Another recurring situation at this time of year is the famous hostess gift... and the gift exchanges. I had broached this subject last year but thought it worthy to revisit as I have found a few other possibilities worth adding to the list.

When you are invited to someone's house, it is customary to bring a gift. This usually ends up being a bottle of wine which often gets served during the course of the night. Although this is a very thoughtful gift, I think it has lost its appeal and is usually indicative of an after thought... or last minute effort. The other problem with the bottle of wine is that currently, you can't have any! This is the perfect case of dichotomy. You are offering a gift that you would not be able to accept in return... or that you can't share. The trick is to NOT put yourself in that situation.

A few years ago, Peter and I were invited to the house of a five star restaurant chef... Can you imagine! We knew he would have prepared a five course meal and the wine would be paired... we really did scratch our heads to find the right gift! Finally, we stopped into a small spice boutique and purchased an amazing flavoured olive oil. This was so well received and of course, they didn't try to serve us a glass of it!!! LOL. There are olive oils available in all sorts of flavours including the wonderful truffles that mark expensive restaurants, and chefs (even amateur ones) appreciate the effort you made to purchase something that "they" will enjoy long after the meal is done.

Yesterday, Peter and I went to some friends and family that live close to where we are staying. I was discussing this very topic with my friend and she said that she always brought something that is consumable as a hostess gift. I had never thought of this aspect but it is a very good idea. As a rule, we don't know the taste for home decor of our hostess which makes it difficult to bring something that she/he will have for a long time. Also, if you bring something that, in theory, should be around for a long time and it's not there the next time you go, someone is going to feel uncomfortable. Bottom line, there are many things that can be offered for the joy and appreciation of your hosts.

Here is a short list: specialty coffees, teas, spices (saffron makes a great gift as people know it to be a select item)... and of course oils and vinegars. You can find a great recipe to put with the spice or oil and make it that much more special. You can also give the gift of music... a consumable that doesn't have any calories!!!

Phase 4 tip...

There is one more thing that you can offer that will be very well received. NUTS! Did you know that in Ottawa, there is a roastery? It is located on Kilborn Ave. (Ottawa Roastery) and their nuts that are freshly roasted. (I can hear the guys laughing here... Sorry!) When we visited Abu Dhabi eight years ago, Peter and I discovered the amazing flavours of FRESH nuts. Nothing can compare and certainly not the canned stuff. So if you are looking to offer something that you will feel right about, something that reflects your weight loss efforts and says "I want you to be healthy too!", don't hesitate to offer nuts... unless of course, there are allergies involved.

On this note, I wish you a great evening. Stay warm, here, we are expecting -14 tonight... Brrr...

Sincerely,



DAY 11 - What are your simple pleasures... All Purpose Quick Spaghetti Sauce

Today's subject was suggested to me by Peter. This morning we got up, made the bed and since we did groceries yesterday, I made us breakfast of scrambled eggs with mushroom, spinach and salsa. Simple, yet reminiscent of a trip to Mexico where daily, Peter would order "huevos rancheros"... We sat down together to have our eggs with no background noise, we ate slowly and enjoyed every mouthful... That has got to be a handful of simple pleasures right there, many of which we don't have the luxury of taking advantage of normally.

What are the simple pleasures that you could be taking advantage of? For most of us, life is going at such an incredibly fast pace that simple pleasures end up being something that we pick up at a drive through window that our family will identify as being a "treat".

I want you to look back into your childhood memories and see what you remember the most vividly. Is it food related? Is it time related? Is it related to a place that you visited on occasion but that always made you smile and feel special? One of the things that our kids have less and less of is time. They too have a busy schedule between home work (and exams at this time of year for older kids), sports, organized groups like scouts or cadets and their social calendar, I bet, they too, wish they had more time. So in the end, time, especially time with us is very important to them.

Making a simple meal that allows you all to be together and enjoy the time as well as the food is what people remember. Every day, we are creating memories for our kids. By the way, if your kids are young now, I speak from experience when I say that they will grow up before you know it. So take advantage of the time now.

While we were talking this morning another subject came up that has to do with our childhood... toys and games! OK, so I'm a bit older than many of you but just in case... who remembers "Tip-It" and "Hands Down". I was telling Peter that I still have these games and I think I'm going to take them out at Christmas and play with my grown up kids. I'm sure we will have a great laugh and this will create a moment they will remember!

So today, I want to offer you a recipe that is quick and easy and that will feed your entire family. Use the time saved to spend it with them and maybe play a game! If you have a game from when you were a kid, bring it out and play with them, they will think this is the funniest thing ever. You know, kids can't imagine us being kids so it always does wonderful things for them to see us in a different light...

All-Purpose Quick Spaghetti Sauce

(from the Lighthearted Cookbook p. 188, 1987 Edition)

This recipe is slightly modified to accommodate certain restrictions in Phases 1-2-3.

- 2 Leeks chopped
- 1 Large clove of garlic, minced
- 1 can of tomato paste (156 ml)

- 1 can of tomatoes (796 ml)
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried basil
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- ¼ tsp of freshly ground pepper

In a large heavy pot, with a little Pam to avoid sticking, brown the leek, add garlic and cook until softened. Stir in tomato paste, tomatoes breaking up with back of spoon (or get the ones already crushed or cubed), oregano, basil, thyme and pepper.

Bring to a boil, reduce heat and let simmer for 10 minutes. Thin with water if desired. Taste to adjust seasoning if necessary. Makes 4 servings, and counts as ½ a vegetable portion and 1 of your restricted vegetables for the week.

In a separate skillet, brown meat (your choice of ground beef, veal, chicken or turkey). This will allow you to measure your 8 oz of meat. In a separate steamer, make cabbage wedges for yourself. The rest of your family can have pasta or introduce them to cabbage it's really a wonderful vegetable that gets a bad wrap because of it's smell (to avoid the smell, place a slice of bread on top of the cabbage while it is cooking - when done, throughout the bread and enjoy a smell free house!). When ready to eat, place one cabbage wedge at the bottom of your plate, add your meat and cover with one cup of the sauce. This is a great meal, simple but comforting! If you wish to add vegetables, all the better for you!

Phase 4 tip...

The original recipe is attached as a picture below... save it, then open it in a software that allows you to resize it. You can use this recipe as a base for a whole bunch of other quick meals like tacos... there is also a quick chili recipe in the left margin that uses this sauce as a base. This is a great tool to have up your sleeve as a quick meal idea.

Finally, don't be shy, FREEZE some of this stuff in 2 or 4 cup portions, and use it when you are really pressed for time! This will be useful to you forever! Many of the store bought sauces are full of undesirable ingredients and preservatives. I spent an entire hour in the sauce aisle once looking for the best one... it can be tricky and they change all the time!

I trust this message finds you well. I am thinking of you even if I am away. Take good care, and talk to you tomorrow!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 12 - Once in a lifetime... Oatmeal Field Berry Muffins / Chocolate Pudding Rolls

We've all heard the expression "Not in a million years!", well this, being the 12th day of the 12th month of the 12th year, will not happen again until 2112, so not in a hundred years... and I'm pretty sure none of us will be here then. Thinking about this made me also think of all the things that have marked this day and this year for each one of us...

As a weight loss coach, I witness all kinds of events that occur in my clients lives. Some of which are absolutely wonderful... for example, this year, some clients decided to get married (in fact there is wedding this weekend, one in January and one next summer and those are only the ones which I know about... Congratulations!), new babies were also born which is also a happy time. There were people who found new jobs and launched their career, others that retired, also a joyful time. Our very own Kim Sullivan from Boom 99.7 was given the opportunity to host a television show... what an opportunity! One client launched a book to serve as a fund raiser for communities in our great white north... The grand child of yet another client pulled through a serious operation and is recovering well... So many happy events that make us grateful to be alive!

And yet for others, there were sad events that will make it hard for them to have the sort of holidays that they would have... My heart goes out to all of you.

Whether it be because it is the 12/12/12 or just because it's that time of year I wanted to look back with you and talk about how our life has evolved. As an eternal optimist, here's what I think...

There was a great story or email that I received probably for the first time in 2005 , and many times since and which I'm sure you have read yourself countless times. It is the story of a farmer who had a prized horse that he was going to bring to fair and who ran away during a storm the night before the fair... His wife and neighbours all thought that this was most unfortunate however the farmer wouldn't say if it was or not because he needed to see how things would unfold. You can read the story [here](#)...

We have all been through events, good or bad, that have changed our lives... and as sure as we are of the qualifier during the event itself only time can really tell and maybe not even then. I'm also thinking here of all the people who received papers in the government this year telling them that their job was cut. I can tell you that a lot of clients saw this as most unfortunate but then turned around and found a better job, reoriented their career, went back to school... many ended up being more fulfilled and more secure.

Seeing all the events unfold, there is no doubt that there are happy times and sad times for all. Time, contrary to popular belief doesn't heal all wounds but it does allow new events to happen and unfold revealing new hope and hopefully new happiness. Look not upon what you have lost but rather what you have still and rejoice in the experience that you have gained in the time passed.

Today, I would like to offer you a couple of recipes that are both comforting and easy to make... Yes, we do find comfort in food, and making the right choice is what helps us feel even better.

Oatmeal Field Berry Muffins

(Phase 1 Compatible)

Grease a mini muffin pan with Pam
Mix 1 pack Ideal Protein Maple Oatmeal with

1/4 teaspoon of baking powder.
Add 1 pack of Ideal Protein Field berry Yogurt,
1 beaten egg, and
1/4 cup of water or until muffin consistency
Mix carefully.
Spoon into pan until 3/4 full then bake at 350F until golden brown for about 10 minutes.

Eat on it's own and get bursts of berry in your mouth, or
use an Ideal Protein Vanilla Pudding as topping.

Kids love them especially if they get to help!
Cheaper than easy-bake oven foods and
better for you!
Makes 6 small muffins, the whole tray would be 2 proteins (1 restricted) or 3 if you have topping.

Chocolate Pudding Rolls

(Phase 1 Compatible)

Add enough water to the Ideal Protein Chocolate Muffin/Pancake for pancake consistency. You will want it to be a bit runny to create a thin pancake (crepe). Cook on both sides. Let cool. Meanwhile, mix pudding flavour of your choice. Once pancake is cool, spread a layer of pudding over top. Roll it up, like a "jelly roll." You can enjoy it right away or, wrap with saran wrap. This will hold the shape until you are ready to eat it.

For entertaining, once the roll has taken shape, you can cut it into small pieces (finger food) and place on a lovely platter. Your guests will love them and you can tell them they won't gain an ounce!
Special Topping: Add just enough water to the Ideal Protein Chocolate Drink to make a thick "sauce."
Drizzle over Ideal Protein Chocolate Pudding Rolls!

Phase 4 tip...

Knowing that we find comfort in food, it is important to find foods that do this without guilt. The negative energy that we get from eating something that we shouldn't completely defeats the purpose. Most desserts combine both fat and carbs making them fun-day only recipes. My tip today is that you go searching for comforting recipes in the previous weight-loss program recipe books that you may have. Look in there for recipes that are low fat and made from smart carbs. I have an LA Weight Loss book (May they rest in peace...) that had an amazing crustless pumpkin pie recipe that I have made time and again! Even guests who were not minding their waist line were in love with it. The other favourite in our family is the Minçavi Brownies made with apple sauce to replace most of the fat. If you need a copy, let me know, it will be my pleasure to share it with you.

So on this day, which also marks the mid-point of our Advent Calendar, I wish you all long-lasting happiness, surrounded by the ones you love.

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



* * * * *

DAY 13 - Shedding light on a mysterious protein... Vegetable Tofu Stir-Fry

Today, I would like to demystify TOFU! Yes, that protein substance that has a bad reputation and that, unless you are vegetarian, never likely makes it into your shopping cart!

But WHY? Well because we are a protein based program and at some point it is important, I think, to see if there are any alternatives to meat. Remember my job is to help you expand your knowledge of food and discover new things. I think that tofu, much like some other things (i.e. vegetables with funny names that our mom has never bought or cooked), end up never being purchased because we simply don't know what to do with it.

First there are a few different types of tofu to choose from but our program only permits the "firm and extra-firm". That is because they are lower in fat. We will then leave the other two "soft and silken" for Phase 4. I have to admit that tofu is as foreign to me as it is to most of you. I am hoping in fact that this entry will generate a few ideas... and maybe that will be the theme of our next Facebook contest!!! By the way, have you gone to vote yet? If not, you can do so by clicking [here](#)!

I have to admit though that I bought firm tofu once to make a recipe from a previous weight loss program. It was for a dessert which I made for my dad's birthday a few years back. The recipe called for some berries to be spread on top of the tort and the whole thing was not only beautiful and appetizing it tasted great... but I never told anyone that it was tofu. They ended up thinking it was some sort of cheesecake. Only my mom was curious enough to ask and I whispered it in her ear. Yep, you guessed it, I was scared that if I told them it was tofu, it would get left on the plates.

So if you are out to discover something new to make instead of meat, eggs, fish and seafood... why not try a bit of tofu. Since I am just as "green" in the tofu isle as most of you are... I went in search of some information. Now understanding what it's made from and how to select it is part of the very basics of anything. I was able to find this great Website that caters to people like me. [Tofu-recipes-cooking-tips](#). This site explains everything you need to know and even gives some recipes. Remember that you can only have the firm or extra-firm so check the recipe before deciding to make it. I had a good chuckle with their notion of mystery ingredient which brought me back to my childhood on those nights when my mom would cook liver and tell us that it was steak that had a bit of freezer burn!!!

Well after doing quite a bit of research, I also found these two sites that offered a list of basic things to do with tofu. [Ten things to do with tofu](#)
[Savvyvegetarian-basic-tofu](#)

For those of you who are fans of Dr. Oz, I have pulled a recipe out of his book "YOU on a diet" and have adapted it for Phase 1-2-3.

Vegetable Tofu Stir-Fry (p.343)

(Phase 1 Compatible)

- 1 tablespoon of extra-virgin olive oil (Phase 1-3 use Pam+non-stick skillet)
- ½ teaspoon toasted sesame oil (Phase 1-3 use Pam + non-stick skillet)
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

½ onion, sliced (Phase 1-3- use 1 leek - white part only)
2 garlic cloves, sliced
1 cup broccoli florets
½ red bell pepper, sliced
6 large button mushrooms, halved
1 teaspoon soy sauce
4 small 2-ounce blocks baked tofu, cubed
2 green onions, chopped
1 small bunch cilantro, chopped
1 teaspoon sesame seeds (not for Phase 1-3)

In wok or large skillet, heat oils and pepper flakes over medium-high heat. Add onion (or leek) and garlic; stir-fry 2 minutes. Add broccoli, bell pepper, mushrooms, and soy sauce; stir-fry until vegetables are crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Add tofu, green onions, cilantro, and sesame seeds; stir-fry until heated through.

Underlined and italicized sections are omitted for Phase 1-3

Phase 4 tip...

Now, I have to say this about the Savvy vegetarian site above... they don't have a great appreciation for processed soy foods like TVP. Their position is that "some people are allergic, and soy can adversely affect people with hypo-thyroidism". While I certainly agree with their take, TVP is a good product that you can keep in your cupboards as a back-up. It doesn't require refrigeration and has a good shelf life. It can be added to your soup, chili, meatloaf and spaghetti sauce for added protein and/or as replacement for part of the ground meat. This product is inexpensive and makes a little meat go a long way. Great for the cottage! Thanks Susan for this tip!

Well I hope you enjoy discovering tofu... May this be the beginning of a new appreciation for this misunderstood protein!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 14 - The factual side of drinking... Don't Drink and Diet!

Yes, I know, we've had this conversation before... but I have new evidence of why this is really bad for you. I'm not talking about the calories here or even the fact that they are EMPTY! We all know that alcohol has no nutritional value, that there is nothing that the body can use all the while having to work twice as hard to metabolize it... what I want to talk about today is more in depth.

Every day I see people in my clinics that totally blow me away by their level of **intelligence**; and they come to us because we, in turn, are knowledgeable in our field. One of the reasons Food-Wise exists is in fact for the WISE part. We strive to make you wiser about the choices you make and it all comes from adding **factual** information to the already vast knowledge base that you possess.

Did you know that alcohol is a toxin? In this day and age, we work hard at eliminating all toxins from our bodies; there is in fact an entire industry that aims at selling detox products but, to their credit, they are not about to tell you how to identify them... that would be like killing the [goose that lays the golden eggs](#)! So how does the body manage toxins? Actually, the liver does that by transforming them into non-toxic substances. During the weight loss phases of the diet, the liver is already quite "busy" transforming "fatty acids into ketonic bodies (ketogenesis) and transforming certain amino acids to glucose (i.e. gluconeogenesis)". When toxins get in the body, this becomes job priority #1 for the liver... so it stops doing what it's supposed to do to make you feel satiated and running smoothly and, declares a state of emergency and starts working to eliminate toxins. This is in fact why your weight loss is compromised but even more so, it's like putting water in your gasoline! The alcohol intake stops the fabrication of fuel and gives it something in turn that it cannot use...

Ok, so this part here, as well as the part in quotes above, comes from a very knowledgeable man whom we have the privilege of working with as our medical reference at Ideal Protein. His name is Mike Ciel and he sent me this info at my request so that I could share it with you. I'm hoping that by providing some scientific background, those of you who love facts will see the logic behind our wanting you to just say NO... "Alcohol is produced by fermentation involving millions of yeast cells. When these cells die, their DNA and RNA are released in the solution. DNA and RNA supply large amounts of "purines", molecules that will be metabolized ultimately to uric acid (wine and beer, particularly "Weiss beer -wheat beer" have very large amount of these). Now folks with "Syndrome X" generally have higher than normal levels of uric acid in their blood already, so drinking alcohol will further increase this and the risk of gout will go up. Coupled with this, the metabolism of alcohol requires energy (i.e. ATP - Adenosine Triphosphate (Think of ATP as a battery that gets charged, and as soon as it is charged, it sets off a spark of energy that can be used to do work in the body)). When ATP gives up it's "energy" (high energy phosphate moieties) AMP is produced. AMP is a purine also, so excessive AMP production will further in uric acid also (fructose can also do this as cells in the body cannot use fructose directly either)." So bottom line is that by introducing alcohol in your body, you create a chemical chain reaction that has highly undesirable side effects such as increased uric acid and possible gout attack. All toxins shock the body but, while in ketosis, alcohol does so at an alarming rate... like being woken up in the middle of the night by your fire alarm!

Are you still with me? Good, so now that we have some chemistry let's look at why it's so hard to stop after one glass... simply, alcohol "does not quench thirst because alcohol is a diuretic.....the more you drink, the more you "pee". It is not uncommon for some folks to drink 3, 6 or more beers during the 3-4 hour course of a football game. Try drinking that same amount of water...you couldn't! Incidentally this is the same 'trick' soft drink companies use: They put large amounts of sodium and caffeine (also a diuretic) in their sodas, thus you never quench your thirst (it actually makes you MORE thirsty) and you drink more."

Another important point is that, alcohol can inhibit the mechanisms of gluconeogenesis to a significant degree. Now the body cannot transform the glycerol (produced by alcohol metabolism or contained in the beverage itself) into glucose for use as fuel. Instead it is converted into triglycerides (fat) and is

usually deposited in the liver. As Dr. Tran says: "Drinking alcohol is like handing the adipocyte the ingredients to make fat on a silver platter"!

Finally, during Phases 1 and 2 there can be serious problems if alcohol is consumed. Remember alcohol will inhibit gluconeogenesis to varying degrees, depending on the individual. The IP diet (phases 1 and 2) does not supply enough carbohydrates for the needs of all the glucose dependent tissues of the body and the body uses these 'gluconeogenic pathways' to supply the glucose requirements of these cells. In this manner hypoglycemia can never occur once the person is in a state of strong ketosis. BUT, because your body is very dependent on the multiple mechanisms of gluconeogenesis during Phases 1 and 2 to keep the glucose-dependent tissues functioning, inhibiting this process could be **very dangerous and could lead to severe hypoglycemia**. Bottom Line: Drinking alcohol during the weight loss phases of the Ideal Protein Diet is strictly prohibited and this, for health reasons as much as for compliance to the program. The consequences could be serious, because severe hypoglycemia will likely occur causing the dieter to pass out!

Phase 4 tip...

Now in maintenance consumption of alcohol in moderation generally poses no problem whatsoever and can be enjoyed, but not every day. Alcohol contains 7 kcal / gram (so it's sort of a cross between a carbohydrate (4 kcal/g) and a fat (9 Kcal/g). A "shot" (1.5 oz. or 45 ml) of 80 proof liquor contains 98 Kcal from the alcohol and the same amount of 100 proof liquor contains 125 Kcal from the alcohol (if it's a "sweetened liquor" then there can be way more!). A 6 oz. glass of 'dry table wine' contains about 150 Kcals. So having one glass of wine EVERY day will add an additional 4500 Kcal / month (or over a pound of fat!).

I have to admit that I waited for a Friday to send this information. I wanted it to be fresh in your mind before you set out on your weekend. This is a popular weekend for office parties and pre-holiday get togethers. Use any alternative to alcohol like an IP Pina colada drink or Blueberry Cranberry drink. Or simply add MIO to some Perrier and voila, you have something to hold in your hand or walk around with that tastes really good. I often ask people if they would drink anyway while on an antibiotic medication that clearly stated NO ALCOHOL BEVERAGES... Remember, this protocol is a medical treatment for your pancreas. All that you are doing right now is soooo good for you on so many levels, you need not ruin it with something that is, as short lived as a glass of cheer!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



* * * * *

DAY 15 - More than just deciding what to wear... 6 Smart Holiday Diet Tricks

Do you remember as a kid when your mom and dad told you that you were going somewhere for dinner? Whether it was at some friend's house or at an uncle's and aunt's place, you would start imagining, in your mind, what you were going to do. Were there any kids your age, were there any cousins that you particularly liked to play with. Maybe there were no kids and if that was the case, you always made a plan so that you wouldn't be bored. Maybe you packed some toys or a book or if you were a little younger, you might have packed a VHS or DVD to watch while the "older" folks enjoyed their adult evening.

I remember us visiting my mother's only brother and his family. They lived in Hawkesbury while we lived in Ottawa (boy that seemed far at the time...). They had a great house with all kinds of neat things and because my two cousins were 5 and 7 years younger than me, they had toys that we had only ever seen on TV. The toys were for kids their age but I didn't care, I had never seen them before so they were fun to play with even if too young for my age group.

I guess, where I'm going with this is the planning aspect of going out to other people's homes. As adults, we get invited, we purchase a hostess gift (see Advent Calendar Day 9 for my thoughts on that...) and then leave the rest play itself out as it may. I think as kids we had a better handle on things. Why not, as adults, plan a few games. I can tell you that your hosts will appreciate this even more than the hostess gift. This is also a great way to steer clear of the kitchen or the food table. There is always a lot of food at these gatherings because by contrast, there is little of anything else.

When I was thirteen I had the great joy of learning how to play guitar. Thanks to my sister's patience and acceptance that her guitar held great appeal to me, I practiced as often as I could and, taught myself to play. This was not our first instrument; our grand-father had gifted us a beautiful Yamaha organ fully loaded, at the time, with a rhythm box and dual keyboard and this, four years prior. Both my sister and I had taken lessons but I was ready for a new challenge and the guitar seemed like the perfect choice. One of the reasons it was so great is that it was portable. A year later, for Christmas, my parents gave me my own guitar and now my sister and I could play and sing together. We both had good voices and so we started taking our show on the road... OK a bit of an exaggeration but basically, we brought our guitar to family and friends houses to lead a sing-a-long. And this, was often part of the invitation. It kept me away from the food table and the joy of seeing people sing was a gift to us. We were never in it to give concerts, we simply wanted to make people sing!

What is your plan when you go to other people's homes for a gathering? Maybe you play an instrument too. Singing always brings people back to amazing memories from their childhood when this was prime entertainment. If you don't play an instrument, you can simply gather a few songs and bring them along. You don't even need to have copies for everyone. If one person has the words, the others will follow. They usually only need the first few words of every verse to remember the rest...

So what if you are not musical... you can always play games. My daughter goes to this [website](#) called minute-to-win-it and finds a bunch of games where all you need are a few things that you can pick up at the dollar store and she brings them to her grand-parents house for New Years day. It keeps people busy and out of the food AND it creates memories! People laugh and for a short while, we are one as a family!

Very recently, my mother sent me a great article from [Reader's Digest Online](#) which gave these 6 Smart Holiday Tricks to stay away from food during the holiday season. I thought I would share them with you.

6 Smart Holiday Diet Tricks



1. Hang with the Kids

If all the adults are circling the food table, spend time with the children. At most ages, kids are more likely than adults to be doing something active. Their energy and playfulness can help distract you from food.

2. Appoint Yourself Activity Director

Take the lead in suggesting non-eating activities that the family can do together, from playing Scrabble or charades to building a snowman.

3. Grab a Water Bottle

When there are lots of high-calorie beverages around, it helps to have an alternative. Keep a glass or bottle of water handy.

4. Keep "Free" Snacks and Beverages on Hand

Satisfy your munchies with very low-calorie treats like celery, sweet peppers, sliced jicama, and diet drinks. That way you won't have to rely on your willpower to steer clear of all those diet-busting rich foods.

5. Be Helpful Anywhere but in the Kitchen

This is a tough one, especially if you're at the in-laws' house. But it's easy to nibble when you're surrounded by food preparation. Volunteer for other duties: cleaning up, setting the table, being bartender, running errands - anything that doesn't involve food.

6. Get Lost

If the sight and smell of all that food become just too much for you, excuse yourself and get out of the house. Take a stroll or go for a drive.

By the way, two things that really stood out for me in the 6 tricks above... the first is Jicama! If you haven't tried it yet, please do so. One of our clients tried it in Mexico last year and fell in love with it. She said it's as if a "potato and an apple had a baby together"! (Sophie, I hope I got it right). At any rate, you get the picture, the sweetness of this vegetable made us wonder for a bit if it was even allowed on the program! Well now it is!!! Another client who has known Jicama for ever says it's really good with a bit of lemon juice, salt and pepper. Don't try to cook it, it really is best raw.

The second thing that stood out for me is trick No. 6... Get lost... LOL I had to laugh but really, why not go for a walk... maybe your friend has a dog longing to get out of the house while nobody has time to take him or her... or kids that would love to go outside but nobody wants to go with them. Pack your snow pants and be ready!

Phase 4 tip...

One of our recently "graduated" dieters planned to be done with the weight loss phases before getting into December (how organized is that!!! ;-)) and aligned her events calendar so that every week she would have her fun day on those special gatherings (now that's really organized!!! Lol). I know this is not always feasible but if you think of what happens the morning after one of these gatherings, you have to agree that you are ready for a "Phase 1" day. You often sleep in a bit because you went to bed later and you are often still stuffed from the night before. So doing a carb-less day is perfect. You

can even indulge in a restaurant breakfast of eggs and ham with tomatoes instead of potatoes. This feels like the pleasure day was prolonged in a sense. I love going to Denny's and ordering the "Ultimate Skillet" without potatoes... it doesn't even come with toast so I need not even say NO!

I hope these tricks will help you get through this time of year but even more, I know these tricks will be the start of a new tradition for you and your family. In a time when video games and HD TV is all the rave, why not introduce a theme that is less high-tech... and more high-touch... and see how it changes your holiday celebrations.



Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss

DAY 16 - Time to look a little deeper... Over 100 ways to feel!

We all know that the holiday season is a time high in emotions. Some of them are happy ones, and some of them remind us of things that, for the most part, we manage to avoid during the rest of the year, but that resurface at this time. The reality is that emotions, good or bad, are a very special kind of **fuel** the likes of which is used to ignite afterburners!

In this country, like many others, when we are happy, we eat!... and then again, when we are unhappy, we eat!... The stronger the emotion, the likelier we are to consume in higher quantities. This is mainly because that is how we have been taught! Of course, if you are working at keeping your food consumption in check, you need to look at the emotional side.

If I had a dollar for every time I have heard someone say: "I'm an emotional eater", I would surely be rich by now... LOL! I think most people are emotional eaters, in that emotions affect the way they eat. Some people eat more, others eat less! Neither is better! Right click on this pic to save it and enlarge it. It contains a list of 100 emotions which will help you qualify more precisely how you feel. Good or bad is not detailed enough. If you want to change the outcome, you need to start by getting to know the driving force!

You guessed it, today, I want you to look at the emotional side of your eating patterns. As we have been brought up to use food to comfort ourselves, there is a strong tie there that we need to investigate because if this holds true on a normal day, imagine at this time of year! Food is available all the time, easily... but even more so at this time of year! And food itself is emotionally charged at this time of year because of the traditions involved!

Let's be honest, our lifestyle is increasingly stressful and we often think "I need a break", "I deserve a treat or a reward", "boy, I could use a pick-me-up" and we turn to the first thing we can get our hands on... Food! Is there a way to attain the same level of comfort without food? Yes of course, it's simply that our brain has yet to be programmed to turn to these alternatives. In order to reprogram our brains, we need to practice and plan.

With the help from a very special friend of mine who picked up for me recently an extra copy of a workbook called "Craving Change", I have here a lengthy list of ways to "nurture yourself" without food. Your first job will be to pick a few that work for you and develop your own. For example, something that is not on the list for me is playing guitar. I can do that, and sing for hours without even seeing the time go by. And guess what, I can't eat while I play or sing!!! So go ahead and develop your own feel good plan!

Emotions Inventory - Over 100 ways to feel!

- Buy yourself flowers
- Take a bubble bath
- Massage your feet with scented lotion
- Curl up with a good book
- Download a new song
- Go window shopping
- Have a tea party with a child
- Put your feet up, close your eyes and relax
- Look through show homes
- Have a candlelit dinner at home
- Give yourself a facial
- Give your pet a hug
- Browse in a bookstore

- Do some star gazing
- Send yourself a card
- Phone a dear friend
- Take the phone off the hook
- Go to bed an hour earlier
- Warm up next to a fire
- Wander through an art gallery
- Have a pedicure
- Put on your pj's and drink tea
- Lie on the grass and watch the clouds
(at this time of year, you can look at the stars while lying on the snow - dress warmly LOL)
- Walk in a park
- Visit a greenhouse
- Blow bubbles
- Colour or sketch (great phone apps like DrawSomething are awesome for this!)
- Head to the driving range (if you miss golfing, an indoor driving range is a great place to go!)
- Go for a drive with your music turned up
- Book a massage
- Go to the store and read greeting cards
- Go fishing (wait for the ice to thicken LOL)
- Rent a movie
- Watch any show that makes you laugh
(Rogers on Demand ROD - Channel 100 is great!)
- Look through picture albums
- watch home videos

OK, so the next step is to keep your list close by all the time! When you are in a panic situation you won't be able to remember any of these I can assure you, so once you have made your list, put it in your wallet or in your phone! Also, if you need to buy anything to be ready when the need arises (i.e. bubble bath, special tea, etc...), please put that on your priority list. You don't want to leave things to chance or to the last minute!

Finally, I want to share a little trick that was taught to me by another close friend who had a somewhat difficult relationship with her mom. This, of course, made the holidays even harder because the friction seemed to increase with every passing year... and that always happens when feelings are repressed. Essentially she started giving her feelings the attention and importance they deserved and the way she did that was to discuss them with the source, in this case, her mom. The trick here is to use a simple tactic that removes the blame but states the facts. This is the old "When... I..." trick... (i.e. when you criticize the way my kids dress, I feel inadequate as a mother). There is no blame, but at long last, your feelings get aired. I'm not saying that the other person will automatically ask for forgiveness, but you as an adult will feel as though you have been true to yourself. It is a gesture of kindness to yourself and a self-esteem promoting strategy. You would stand-up for your kids wouldn't you... now you are doing it for yourself!

Phase 4 tip...

All the food strategies in the world will not help you stay on track if you don't check your emotions... If you dieted during the year and were able to stay on track... but live 300 miles from home... by choice... and you are going to visit your family in a week or so... and slightly dreading it... start looking at your relationship with them now so that you can have a strategy in place. What if this is the first time you put yourself first and, out of kindness to yourself and to them don't fall for the same old drama!

On the other hand, this may be the first time your family sees the new you... and although it is a positive emotion, there is a bit of stress with that too; expectations to live up to. I remember after any

weight loss program, the minute I picked up a cookie, people were watching me. If I took a second one, I usually got a comment... This made me feel uncomfortable and I thought it was because of them. I now know it was because of me! Being a sugar addict made ME feel a little paranoid about being observed AND about deserving credit for all my efforts.

Well Peter and I are back and ready to return to what we love to do. I look forward to seeing you this week if you are coming in for a consult. If not, then I say, get some rest, there are only 8 days of shopping left before Christmas! LOL

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 17 - What's the secret ingredient? Talking about MSG! + Beef Chow Mein Recipe

Did your heart skip a beat? I know that Chinese food has a certain appeal and darn it, does it ever taste good. Sadly, it is mostly carbs and in many cases MSG is incorporated in the food which makes it taste even better... Ah, MSG... why is it so bad? Let's see if I can shed a bit of light on the matter.

I remember taking my kids, when they were much younger, to the Chinese food buffet and letting them select what they wanted to eat. Don't get me wrong, there are some good choices to make but most of them don't appeal to kids. As a result, my daughter would develop a massive headache before we were even done our dinner... and this would often culminate into full indigestion with all the glorious "displays" that come with it...! After a few times, we figured it out... it was the MSG!

I did a bit of research and found the following [website](#) to enlighten us on what this additive is and what it does...

MSG is technically, a "flavour enhancer". It activates the taste buds, making them more receptive to flavour. It makes things taste better by making your taste buds better at tasting.

If that was the only thing it did, there would be no problem. Unfortunately, it isn't. Equally unfortunate is that our FDA has not caught on to the problem and MSG maintains its status, "generally regarded as safe". It should be banned, especially since it is abused by the food industry so much. Here is a summary of the problems:

1. Some people are sensitive to it. They eat a small amount of it and they get an anaphylactic reaction to it. Like other allergies...peanut, wheat, citrus, shellfish etc. the reaction runs the gambit from causing discomfort to life threatening. Because MSG is so widely abused, it actually should be banned. The reason is simple. If someone has a deadly allergy to peanuts, they don't eat peanuts or products that have peanuts in them. The few products that have peanuts in them, but are not obvious, mark this on the package. Contrast that with MSG where most packaged foods have MSG in them but, because of a loophole in labelling laws, it's not on the ingredients list, and you have a bad situation that requires government intervention.

2. MSG does more than enhance flavour. It dramatically stimulates appetite and causes bingeing. If you ever wondered why you can't eat only one potato chip....MSG is the reason. You eat. You are full. But, MSG is activating the part of your brain telling you to eat some more. Food manufacturers use MSG to make their foods addicting. This causes obesity. It takes away a person's choice in what they eat by turning food into something like crack cocaine. That is immoral and should be illegal. MSG is a major contributor to the incredible increase in diabetes in our society. It's also a major factor in bulimia. MSG causes people to binge. That's why it is put into food. More and more, people are figuring this out and choosing not to eat food with MSG. However, food manufacturers are not content to allow even this personal choice for people. Because of the GRAS designation, they are allowed to include MSG as an ingredient in a list of so-called "secret ingredients"....those that you can't put on a food label because competitors will figure out your recipe, copy you and then use this knowledge to take your business. Furthermore, there are products that have MSG in them and which, when you include them on your ingredient list and you don't have to label the individual ingredients. The names of the most common products? Things like Natural Flavourings....Naturally Flavoured....Artificial and Natural Flavours. THESE ARE PRODUCT NAMES, not FDA designations. They are intentionally given deceitful names like these in order to trick you into thinking that they are ingredients and not products. Since those products are mostly MSG, anytime you see them in the ingredients list, just replace the word MSG... because that is basically what it means.

3. The most controversial problem with MSG is what it does to stimulate your appetite. It is what is

known as an "excitotoxin". This is a chemical that stimulates your nervous system using the mechanism that is used for fighting off infections or removing damaged tissue. Your brain is normally sterile and it doesn't have the normal type of immune system the rest of your body has. For the rest of your body, the immune system is based off an inflammatory mechanism. Inflammation in your brain will kill you pretty darn quick, so that mechanism is the technique of last resort for your body fighting off such things. Instead, it has a glial system. The glial system secretes various chemicals that rip things apart. The chemicals also, stimulate the brain. Guess what the mechanism of action for MSG is? Guess what the side effect is? The long term effect of this is a slow degradation of the surrounding tissue. MSG has been implicated in Alzheimer's. The mechanism for this is obvious for those who understand the science.

MSG is bad news and to be avoided. Most Chinese restaurants understand this and have removed this ingredient from their cooking. The problem is packaged and processed foods, especially the food you buy at fast food restaurants. The bottom line is this. The only way to avoid MSG in rather large amounts is to not eat those foods.

Here is a list of side effects that have been attributed to MSG:

- Numbness
- Burning sensation
- Tingling
- Facial pressure or tightness
- Chest pain
- Headache
- Nausea
- Rapid heartbeat
- Drowsiness
- Weakness
- Difficulty breathing for asthmatics

OK, so you can't believe everything you read on the Internet so I won't try to validate this information. I will say this however... there are certain foods that keep you coming back and this, for no logical reasons.

Years ago, I worked at a company where my boss was determined (almost to the point of obsession...) to reproduce the taste of the Tim Horton's coffee he purchased every day on his way into work. We bought the coffee grounds from Tim Horton's... but it didn't taste the same... We had a brewer installed that worked the same way theirs did... still it didn't taste the same... Finally, our boss used their paper cups thinking it somehow had to do with the cups... and still it didn't taste the same! I have no proof that it is MSG but I do have my suspicions!

At any rate, all this information was leading to this recipe for some homemade Chinese food that you can trust and indulge in!

Beef Chow Mein

(Phase 1 Compatible)

Ingredients:

1-1/2 lbs thin round steaks

- 1-1/2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 6-8 sliced green onions
- 1 clove crushed garlic
- 1 cup WF Asian or Sesame Ginger dressing
- 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup sliced peppers
- 1 cup bean sprouts
- 1/3 cup light soy sauce

Preparation

In a slow cooker, combine all ingredients except peppers and bean sprouts. Cover and cook on low for 8 hours. 1 hour before serving, turn to high and add the peppers and bean sprouts.

OR on the stove top in a wok, cook beef strips - then add in veggies and cook with dressings and seasonings as desired. Try cooking with [miracle noodles](#).

Makes 2 servings

Phase 4 tip...

Now that you have the freedom of choice, you can make homemade Chinese foods to your hearts content. Most of the recipes are filled with vegetables. The thing that you must watch out for however is the starch that is often added as a thickening agent for the sauces. Be careful so that you don't end up with "empty" calories that don't bring you any nutrition and only serve to spike your insulin. As you know Phase 4 is not about low carbs... it is about slow carbs!

I do apologize for the lateness of this entry. First day back on the job, it ended up being busier than expected. I appreciate that you read me... and your comments are always welcomed!

Have a good night, let's talk again tomorrow!
We will announce the Rotini Contest Winner!!



Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss

DAY 18 - A little stuffing... a little gravy... a little custard!!! 3 great recipes!

Today, I greeted many who will only return after Christmas and it made me realize just how close we are to the big day... In fact, by this time next week, it will be all over and you will be looking through the boxing-day sales to see if it's worth getting up at 4:00 a.m. to stand in the cold to get a deal! So before it's too late, here are a few recipes that you can do for Christmas and that are IP approved...

I was going to write a long story but thought I would give you a break and instead give you three recipes that are easy and that will complement well your holiday meal.

Stuffing

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of your favourite vegetables
 - 1 cup of diced mushrooms
 - 1 teaspoon of poultry seasoning
 - 2 egg whites
 - 1 teaspoon of sea salt
 - 8 to 16 oz of water
 - 1 packet of IP Chicken Soup
 - 1 to 2 teaspoon of soy sauce
 - *Optional seasoning: Rosemary, Basil, Thyme and/or Garlic
- 1 recipe of Oatmeal Biscuits made and cooled (see below)
1 teaspoon of poultry seasoning or other

Method:

Prepare the biscuits according to IP's Healthy Recipes Vol. 2, page 69 (see below): Let dry an hour or two after cooling off.

Mix in a bowl the biscuits, seasonings, vegetables and mushrooms. Blend well and put aside. In your shaker, add 8 oz. of water to your packet of IP's Chicken Soup (more water may be necessary). Add two egg whites to the soup mix, blend well and pour on the vegetable/biscuits mix, in an oven-ready dish sprayed with olive oil. Bake 20 minutes on 350°C.

Oatmeal Biscuits (IP's Healthy Recipes Vol. 2, P. 69)

- 2 packets of Ideal Protein Maple Oatmeal
- 1 large egg, white
- 1 to 2 oz of water

Beat egg then stir into oatmeal until mixed thoroughly. Add water to thin batter until spoonable - but not runny. Spoon onto non-stick baking sheet and bake at 400 F (205 C) for about 10 minutes or until golden.

Sauce / Gravy

Ingredients:

6.5 oz. (200 ml) of hot water (not boiling)

1 packet of IP Chicken Soup or Leak Soup

Pour the hot water in a bowl. Add the packet contents and blend with a hand mixer. Serve with vegetables or meat. You can add or remove water to the mix depending of the desired consistency.

Custard

Ingredients:

2 packets of IP's Butterscotch pudding

2 packets of IP's Vanilla pudding

1 egg white

1 pinch of sea salt

Pumpkin pie spices and nutmeg to taste

Mix all ingredients together well. Bake in oven for 20 minutes on 350°C. Cool off and enjoy!

Phase 4 tip...

On our table at Christmas, we have many things, but we never forget the salad! This in fact is part of the tradition! Salad you say? Yep. Actually, my sister is responsible for the salad (yes Claire, if you could bring it again this year it would be wonderful... thank you!) and, she always brings it in a salad bowl that use to belong to our maternal grand-mother and that she inherited so many years ago. She wouldn't dream of bringing it in another bowl because we would miss it too much. My grand-mother created many of the traditions that we still hold today but as my addiction to sugar has substantially changed the portrait of our festive table, one thing remains and it's the salad! I kid you not! So why not start a tradition for your own family. If this is your first Christmas in Phase 4, pick a salad that you know everyone likes, go to the dollar store and buy a great bowl that will be THE bowl for many celebrations to come and start something that is not sugar or dessert related! You will be amazed at your ability to inspire others in your family. You are in a great place right now to do just that!

I want to take a line or two to thank all those who came out to our two first open houses (the one on Sunday at Montreal Rd. - in the freezing rain... and the one today at Innes in the snow and sleet!). Your support was touching! If you weren't able to come, you still have one more opportunity on Thursday at our Baseline clinic (from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

I am so glad to have the opportunity to journey with you. Our team here (Peter, Carolyne, Kathlene and I) are overjoyed at your response to our invitation. Thank you again!

Have a great night, until tomorrow!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 19 - Holy Crap! It's whole wheat! Are you Gluten Intolerant?

Today's topic serves many purposes. The first is to enlighten you generally speaking... The second is to enlighten you in the short term and the third is to enlighten you in the long term.... Confused yet? Well let me clear things up. Today, I want to talk about wheat!

Generally speaking, if you are on Phases 1 & 2, you are not yet eating breads and pasta and such but the information that I will share with you today should provoke a major Ahha moment! So if for no other reason that to be better informed, I think you will benefit greatly from these facts.

In the short term, well, you will be having a Christmas meal in less than a week that will propose all kinds of "goodies", many of which will contain wheat (i.e. stuffing, gravy, desserts, etc.). Now, in the long term, the information contained herein could change the way you eat forever! I'm not kidding!

Remember Dale and Kyle from our countdown emails? Well, last summer as they were starting their Phase 4, they suggested a book to me that I had not read yet and which piqued my interest. The book is called "The Wheat Belly" by author William Davis, MD, and as I am always striving to learn new things that I can pass along to enrich your journey, I went to [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) and placed my order. Over a weekend at the trailer, the book got read and my frustration skyrocketed! No, the book did not frustrate me but what I learned made me down right angry! I found out that the information that I learned, that we all learned, about whole wheat, being a slow carb, was totally false!

Apparently, research has shown that the grain of wheat that we consumed as children (OK, I am really dating myself here... but let's say about 50 years ago...) has been genetically modified to the great detriment of all it's nutritional value. In fact (can you hear the tone rising here...) scientific research has shown that the glycemic index of wheat is higher than that of sugar! How's that for feeling sucker punched!!! Ask any doctor what the number one source of slow carb is and they will all recommend whole wheat bread! Well guess what... they are all out to lunch!

Tell me more...

I did have fun this week however, because I caught an episode of Dr. Oz's show in which his guest was the author of The Wheat Belly. Now I have to say that I rarely watch or listen or even read Dr. Oz's stuff, but I know many of you do and so I say to myself, "all these people can't be wrong... ". Therefore, from time to time, I check him out... scientifically speaking of course! LOL Well this week was especially fun because for once I felt like I was smarter than him! This guy, just like the rest of them has been recommending whole wheat right, left and, centre, and the look on his face as he realized that wheat was worst than sugar... priceless! The beauty is that he tested some people himself because he had to prove the theory for himself... using his labs of course... and he got the same results! Whole wheat bread caused a higher insulin spike than the candy bar! If you want to see this for yourself, check out this [link](#).

But what does this mean for you? Let me tell you a story. After reading this book last summer, it was very hard for me to remain indifferent. I started eliminating wheat from my diet and found that the impact on my hunger was significant. The impact on my gastro-intestinal track was also significant and in a very positive way. My mind clarity was also greatly improved... remember the sugar fog? Same thing was happening with bread... The way my body reacted to my eliminating wheat was so positive that I, just like Mehmet Oz, couldn't deny there was a link.

Again, what does it mean for you? It means that you cannot ignore this little nugget of information. You don't need to pick up the book (unless you want to of course), just go and listen to the videos (there are four and they last about 5 minutes each). You may discover why bread and pasta, in the

past, had such a hold on you. This may help you decide on an action plan for when you finish your weight loss phases and start reintroducing carbs. This may help you uncover the strong chemical hold that wheat had on you which, in fact, is not unlike an addiction but is more chemical than emotional or psychological. Finally, learning the real facts about wheat may help you feel less fearful of regaining the weight when you get into Phase 4.

Knowledge is power my friend! The more you know about something, the less likely it is to catch you off guard. It's like when we were kids and feared a monster under the bed... Remember? All our parents had to do was turn on a light to show us there was nothing under the bed... and we could get back to sleep... Let this information turn a light on for you!

Phase 4 tip...

I thought about writing on this subject about two weeks ago but every time I started gathering my thoughts, it always felt like the subject was entirely for my Phase 3 & 4 audience and not for the Phase 1 & 2. However, today a light of my own came on. This is not a subject that you can "swallow" all in one shot. It takes a little getting used to... it takes reinventing the way we see many of the things we eat, every day... it takes the willingness to try something new! That's when I realized that if you wait until Phase 4 to start thinking differently about whole wheat, you might suffer quite a bit and get "sucked back in". However it is never too late so if you find that since you have started eating whole wheat again, the bloating has returned, the constipation has returned (when you thought whole wheat was all about fibre...), and the constant hunger has returned, I highly recommend you look at this more closely. Experiment a little and see what you find! By the way, there is a great cereal (I can see Susanne shaking her head no... LOL) called [Holy Crap](#)... proudly Canadian, it doesn't contain any wheat!)

Everyone is different! This is precisely why we have individual consults! But some basic facts remain... smoking is bad for everybody! Hard drugs are bad, they too don't discriminate! Does whole wheat fit in that category too? You be the judge!



Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss

DAY 20 - Soup's-on! Mushroom Leek Soup

I have to tell you that tonight I feel as though I have let you down... I know I haven't really but I have spent the last 21 days searching for a particular recipe and have not yet found it. Do you remember the first day of this Advent Calendar? That was the day I talked about mandolins... well I really wanted to talk to you about soups... but because I couldn't find the recipe that I wanted to give you on that day, I thought of writing about kitchen tools instead and postpone the soup until I found the right recipe. That is actually why that first email went out so late!

I searched the Internet though looking for recipe, thought I had found it and even ordered a copy of a 2010 magazine which took 12 days to get here... and which, to my great disappointment, did not have the recipe I was so sure to find. So let's make this a call for help...

A few years back, I found myself at the doctor's no doubt with a sinus infection and while waiting, I picked up a copy of what I think was Canadian Living magazine (Nov 2010) which had the most incredible recipe for vegetable soup! What was so special about this recipe you likely wonder? It was the simplicity of it and the fact that it could be used for any vegetable you have on hand. As I recall, you started the recipe with 4 cups of broth and then added "x" number of cups of any vegetable and with a few tweaks on spices, you had yourself a different soup which had started with the same basic ingredients...

I remember leaving the medical clinic and rushing to Metro to get a copy of the magazine but when I got there, they were already selling the next month's issue! I should have gone to the library but no, I didn't think of it! (Shoulda coulda woulda!!! Darn!) I did however go back to the clinic (the next day unfortunately) and the magazine was gone! It was likely inside one of the examining rooms but I didn't think of asking. Today, when I spot a recipe in a magazine that belongs to someone else, I simply pull out my smart phone and snap a picture! I can expand it later and print it from my computer! Back then however, I didn't have that kind of technology!

So finally, I decided to submit another soup which is great too but not entirely as versatile as the recipe I had hoped to give you.

ATTENTION: If you have any information as to the whereabouts of this missing recipe, please send your tips to ME... LOL!

Mushroom Leek Soup

Preparation 10 min. Cooking 20 min

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

2 leeks, 1" diameter
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 ½ cups finely sliced mushrooms
3 tbsp non-hydrogenated margarine
½ tsp marjoram
3 cups light chicken broth
6 whole allspice
Sea salt and fresh-ground pepper to taste

Light sour cream and cooked crumbled bacon, to taste, for decoration (Phase 4 only)

Preparation:

Slice the leek as finely as possible (the mandolin works great here!). Sauté leek and garlic in margarine until leeks are just translucent. Add mushrooms, broth and seasonings. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until all vegetables are tender, about 15 min. Adjust salt and pepper to taste and serve. You can also garnish the soup with a little bit of sour cream and crumbled bacon.

As a side note, this recipe came from the Ideal Protein Healthy Recipes Volume 2 which also contained the following information about a very potent but wonderful spice.

"Allspice", also called Jamaica pepper, combines the flavour of several aromatic spices, such as cloves, cinnamon, pepper and nutmeg. Because of its culinary resemblance with cloves, it will often be used as a replacement. It accompanies numerous sweet and salted dishes and will be a perfect seasoning for meat (game meat, marinades, poultry) and sauces. Allspice can be used whole or ground but it has to be used sparingly because it is really spicy. It is digestive, [carminative](#) and anti-rheumatic.

Phase 4 tip...

The nice thing about this recipe is that you can use it as gravy with other vegetables and meats or as sauce on your pasta! If you wonder what to do with cream of mushroom soup, simply ask Google and you will get a ton of ideas. Many of them will come from people who use Campbell soup but this is where you will have a distinct advantage. Rather than using a canned product that is filled with undesirables, make your own!

If you went outside today, you will likely have found it much colder than the previous days. This is exactly when soup does the trick for me. I encourage you to make a pot and use it as a replacement for your salad. You can eat two cups of vegetables quite easily when they are in a soup!... and eating something warm always feels more satisfying!

Have a great night, until tomorrow!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 21 - Why not pizza!!! Pizza Recipe

Ha! I bet I struck a cord here! I don't know about you but for many years, our Friday night ritual was Pizza... which at some point became Friday night nachos but the theme remained... when Friday night came, we wanted to give ourselves a break and, let's be honest, reward ourselves for our week's work, for our dedication to the time schedule and for filling everyone's needs, likely ahead of our own!

I know what you are thinking here, you think I just want to taunt you with something you can't have... Well disabuse yourself of that notion right now because I would never dream of doing such a thing! I do however want to provide and fully IP approved solution that will give you the satisfaction you seek and none of the guilt. It is Friday today and you have done spectacularly well during this month of December and I want to reward you!

When my kids were young, I remember doing birthday parties where each kid made his own pizza... it was a real activity and they had fun creating their food. Time together is something we have less and less of these days. We need to create these opportunities and as I watch the snow fall this morning, I figure that by tonight, most people will want to stay out of the storm. This would be a great time to create your own pizza. They can make theirs and you can make yours.

Pizza

Servings: 2 restricted (save your bar for another day)

Ingredients

2 IP Plain Crepe packets
½ cup finely chopped mushrooms
¼ cup finely chopped green pepper
Green Onions
3 Tbsp tomato sauce
2 Tbsp cooked Ground Beef
oregano
sea salt
½ IP Southwest Cheese Curls

Preparation

Make up the Plain Crepes using 2/3 of the water required. Spread thinly on a cookie sheet covered with parchment paper. (Make sure you use the paper; even if you spray the pan, the crepe will still stick!) Sprinkle with oregano and sea salt. Cook in 350 F oven for 15 minutes. Peel from paper and turn over. Spray top with Olive Oil PAM and return to oven for another 10 minutes, or until crepe looks and feels like a cracker.

Add tomato sauce and spread thinly over cracker. Sprinkle with green pepper, mushrooms, green onions, ground beef, top with crushed Southwest Cheese Curls and bake for another 5-10 minutes.

Phase 4 tip...

As we progress with the daily topic, it is important to tie it all in so that in the end, I not only talk the talk but I also walk the walk... Pizza sits on a wheat crust and you might be thinking that my theories are getting crossed. Well don't you worry, I still have my head on straight and to prove it I wanted to offer a Wheat Free solution that I have tried many times...

Do you remember that when you got into phase 4, I told you that my fun day is usually pizza? Yes, pizza is my pleasure food. As a kid, I would slide the top off because I hated vegetables and my mom always ordered combination pizza - God I hated green peppers! I would start by eating the crust and then pick the cheese apart to take the green stuff off and would eat the topping last... and on to the next piece. How did I go from "ah non pas de la pizza!" to "how about some pizza tonight...", it's still a mystery. All this to say that if I recommend a pizza, you can be sure I have tested it and I know it's good. For those of you who may have tried the gluten free pizza in the fast pizza joints and thought it tasted like cardboard, well this one is not like that. It is actually quite enjoyable and the neat part is that they have been making it for over 20 years! The place is Bella Vista on Alta Vista... Yes, "rrwhat a pizza"! Located at the corner of Bank and Alta Vista (in the Your Independent Grocer mall) you might enjoy stopping into Long and McQuade if you are a music fan, they have the neatest selection of music and instruments.

Yep, it's still snowing, I love it! Don't hate me because I love snow, I didn't ask for it, it's just part of the place we live in. Sheron our receptionist at the Baseline clinic will be excited because she will get her white Christmas (Jamaica, her birth place didn't provide that for her!). This is also the best day to go shopping if you are not done because most people will choose to stay home out of the snow. Take it slow and you will be able to enjoy your shopping trip instead of fighting through the crowds!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



* * * * *

DAY 22 - I should have thought of this sooner!!! IP Ice Cream and Dark Chocolate Sorbet

I have been very very good this year and what I would like for Christmas is... an ice cream maker! Now if this is your wish and you are only thinking about it now, the chances of it making the tree this year, are pretty slim... what with only three days left before Christmas... My apologies, I wish I had thought of writing this earlier in the month!

Whether you are in Phase 1, 2, 3 or 4, there is an ice cream for everyone! I know, you probably don't believe me but I will even share recipes so hang-in there! ;-) Ice cream is one of the things that most of us hold in our childhood memories and which has survived the test of time! I worked with a lady who was doing another popular diet that didn't have the restrictions that we do, and every week after her weigh-in, she and her husband would stop at DQ for an ice cream cone! It always made me laugh because I thought... if you skipped the ice cream, you would probably be done by now! But that's another story...

As a sugar addict and one who watches the ingredients list, I have noticed one thing... you can get low or no fat ice cream... or you can get "diabetic" ice cream but you can never get low fat no sugar ice cream! Whenever they make something with a sugar replacement (i.e. sucralose) there is always a ton of fat and on the flip side, whenever you see "skinny" (i.e. low fat) ice cream, it is always made with loads of sugar! Last spring, I bought a book so that I could familiarize myself with vegetarian low-carb cooking. Now you don't have to be a vegetarian to enjoy this cookbook. I can assure you that when your entire protein supply comes from meat, you will likely start looking for alternative sources too!

Well this book "[Low-Carb Vegetarian](#)" by Margo DeMello is made to be an introductory course on this lifestyle. It is well written and quite funny! There are good recipes that will be useful when on Phase 4 but what I found most useful what the author's recommendations. For example, on page 30, she lists "Useful Appliances" that you should have in your kitchen to make your life easier... Good knives, Vegetable chopper, good measuring cups, non-stick saucepans... and you guessed it, an Ice Cream Maker! Here is what she writes :

"If you want to make the ice creams and sorbets in this book, you'll need to get one of these. But don't worry. Today's ice cream makers are nothing like the big wooden contraption your family had when you were a kid, where you had to sit in the bathtub surrounded by rock salt and crank till you got tennis elbow. Today's makers are nifty little devices in which you keep the freezer bowl in the freezer until you're ready, and all it takes is a few cranks in front of the TV to get your ice cream...!"

Now to be honest, I actually got one for my birthday last June so I'm not actually waiting for Santa to deliver one under the tree... the benefit of this of course is that I can share my thoughts and experience with you.

One of the things I love about this machine is that you have to make it to get it! This little part holds the most appeal to me... During the time you spend making the ice cream, you feel the anticipation, you feel as though you are creating something with love for yourself and others in your family AND it is healthy! Now the new machines take about the same amount of time to make the ice cream as it would otherwise take to make Pillsbury Crescents!!! And we know how fast that is! It is literally that easy. Ours is a Cusinart which you can buy for roughly \$60 at Bed Bath & Beyond (at the Trainyards) but if you are looking for an even more cost effective piece, you can get a different one at Walmart for about \$20.00. This model however only makes soft ice cream...

So now that your mouth is watering, here are some Phase 1-4 approved recipes! The first one is compliments of Dale who sent it to me last July (with a picture)! As you can see, our clients are a great source of information... and we appreciate it very much. Every time someone brings forth a new idea, you can be sure that it is share at great length! Everybody wins!!!

IP Ice Cream (by Ruthie Buxbaum)

Ingredients:

1/2 cup ice

1 UHT chocolate or
vanilla ready made drink

1/2 cup very cold water

1 packet choc or vanilla or even
strawberry pudding

2 droppers of the sweet leaf Stevia extract for sweetness (like chocolate, hazelnut, toffee, orange, berry, or even peppermint)

Place all above ingredients in order in blender. Mix VERY well in the blender. Add to ice cream maker & 20 minutes later... VOILA... ice cream!

You can also put in Walden Farms caramel, marshmallow, or chocolate syrup too... And, sometimes I add the raspberry WF spread to the strawberry pudding..... mmmm.

Dark Chocolate Sorbet (Cuisinart booklet)

Note: Sugar was replaced with Splenda for the benefit of our Phase 1-3 readers. Makes about 5 cups

Ingredients:

3 cups (750 ml) water

1 2/3 cups (400 ml) Splenda

Pinch of salt

1 2/3 cups (400 ml) cocoa powder, sifted

1 teaspoon (5 ml) pure vanilla extract

1. Prepare a simple syrup with the water, Splenda and salt by combining all three in a medium sauce pan set over medium-low heat. Cook mixture until the Splenda is fully dissolved.

2. Gradually add the cocoa powder to the simple syrup by whisking constantly until smooth. Add the vanilla and stir to combine. Cover and refrigerate 2 to 3 hours, or overnight.

3. Turn on the Cuisinart ice cream maker; pour the mixture into the frozen freezer bowl and let mix until thickened. About 15 to 20 minutes. The sorbet will have a soft, creamy texture. If a firmer consistency is desired, transfer the sorbet to an airtight container and place in freezer for about 2 hours. Remove from freezer about 15 minutes before serving.

Phase 4 tip...

If you love your ice cream, I bet your heart skipped a beat when you saw that question during phase 1 remember? "Which of the following is better... one small bowl of ice cream every night or a BIG portion of ice cream once a week?" And the answer of course was a BIG portion once a week. The reason for that is that most ice creams available at the store have empty calories and spike your insulin. Here is a recipe that will give you something fun to eat all the while giving you some of your valuable fruit and PROTEIN! Enjoy!

Strawberry Tofu Sorbet
(Low-Carb Vegetarian by Margo DeMello)

Servings: 2

Ingredients:

- 6 ounces (3/8 pound) silken tofu
- 1 table spoon frozen orange juice concentrate
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup sliced strawberries (about 4 medium)
- 1 pack Splenda or other sugar free sweetener

In a blender or food processor, combine all of the ingredients and blend until smooth. Pour into a medium mixing bowl.

To quick chill, next the bowl of sorbet in a larger bowl filled partially with ice water. Stir often until cold, about 5 minutes; otherwise pout the bowl of sorbet into the refrigerator for at least an hour.

Pour the chilled sorbet into an ice cream maker. Freeze according to the machine's directions.

Each serving contains 1/3 serving of protein and 1/2 serving of fruit!

Hope you kept warm today. I went out to do some last minute shopping and was very surprised at the bite from the wind. Anyway, as my Mom would say, I'm glad to not be sleeping outside tonight... I will have a thought for those who are less fortunate! Brrr!

Enjoy your Saturday night... only a few days left before the big day!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 23 - Follow this to the end even if it sounds familiar... A Love Affair Gone Wrong + Recipe websites

Back about a year and a half ago, I wrote a piece on the love affair between people and food and I wanted to share it again because it is particularly relevant at this time of year. If this is familiar to you, please read to the end because there is a separate parallel that I want to make that really applies during the holiday season...

A love affair gone wrong...

Who doesn't like a good love story that ends well... give me the red ribbon ending and I'm a happy gal! Well, here's a story that has all of the elements for a great love affair but that is doomed to fail, right from the start.

I'm talking of course about the love story between people and food. First of all, there is a physical attraction that cannot be denied. Food looks good; it's as simple as that! A lot of us actually refuse to eat the stuff that looks bad. I for one, never use to eat anything GREEN. I was convinced that it could not taste good, a notion that came undoubtedly from my childhood memory of the taste and smell of green beans coming out of a can! Yuk! So we like foods that look good... ever notice that bakers make the best looking foods? You can pile those bright coloured veggies in a beautiful, symmetrical, aesthetically pleasing display... it can't compete with a cake even if the icing is not fancy!

Second, there is the rush. Not just the sugar rush... people who like pasta and bread and chips get the rush too! It's a lot like the way you feel when you first fall in love! Remember after a first date that really went well, that carried all the hope of a "forever after"? You can't wait to talk to or see the person again... Are you starting to get the picture?

Finally, the one that sucker punches us every time... is the notion of bad! How attractive is that! You know what I mean; we have all been attracted to someone in our lives that we knew were the bad boys or girls! When we were with them, we felt like we were living on the edge, we even looked better and got noticed more in their company. There is also something irresistible about the thought that with us, they would not be bad, that love would conquer all and they would turn themselves around. Heck, millions of dollars in movies and book sales have created that notion for us and those are the best stories! But this is where the story turns sour.

Yes my friends, I am sorry to say that this love affair doesn't have the same ending as in the book, which in fact is where a lot of problems stem from. Our story evolves like this... we love these foods and give them an almost life like persona, then when the doctor gives us the "reality-check" or we tip the "Toledos" at a new record high, we feel as though we have to take a "break" from the relationship. But after a few months of being away, we feel bad for having abandoned our love and we pay them a "visit"... and then, if we are not careful, we fall in love all over again! They haven't changed and the attraction is still there. We sometimes even try to make up for our time away by giving more attention than we use to (a.k.a binging!).

The reality is that food will not change. The bad will stay bad and the good will stay good. What we have to do is change the perception that we have that the bad food is somehow more attractive.

There is another kind of love story that I really like... it's the story of the ugly duckling, the story of the ordinary-looking becoming stunningly beautiful... the story of the goodie-two-shoes Sandy in "Grease" who becomes the hot and sexy, curly haired goddess at the end of the movie! Can you

imagine your ordinary good food changing into the most amazing stuff you have ever eaten? Can you imagine not being able to stay away from it? Can you imagine giving into such foods without guilt or restraint? I can! Start Google'ing my friends, there is an entire world of fancy, sexy, tasty, looks-bad-but-it's-good-for-you foods out there and it's waiting for us to dig right in.

Here are a few web site and recipes to get you started...

[Healthy Recipes \(main directory\)](#)

[Roasted-Garlic-Lemon-Broccoli](#)

[Broccoli-with-roasted-red-peppers](#) (replace onion with leek)

[Broccoli-in-roast-chicken-drippings](#)

[Cooking Nook - Recipe Directory](#)

[Roasted Cauliflower Salad](#) (substitute White-Wine vinegar and honey)

[Mushroom Recipe](#)

Tell me more...

So during the holiday season, not only are the goodies on the table, things we haven't seen since we started the diet, but some of them only come once a year!!! I understand... remember that I am a sugar addict!

Have you ever been to a high school reunion and saw some of the people you haven't seen since high school. Did you notice that for the most part, the ones that were really good looking back then ended up losing most of their appeal and some of the ugly ducklings turned out to be really great later! Do you remember the embarrassing moment when you were caught staring at someone that you couldn't quite place because there wasn't anybody that good looking that you can remember! Prepare yourselves, this is the effect that some foods that never used to appeal to you before may have after being on restricted carb intake for the past little while. Some foods that you wouldn't have given the time of day to before will now look down right irresistible! Be careful! Your brain will not be functioning right because it may be under a spell. You will go in with a master plan but if your Mom made all your favourites, the plan may get kyboshed!

To try and minimize the damage, here are some tips:

1 - Prepare a list of the things that will be served. One thing that you can almost bank on is that this Christmas meal will likely be the same (except for one or two variations) as the one served last year, the year before and the year before that. This is what traditions are made of. If you are going to a new place, call ahead to ask what is on the menu...

2 - Once you have made the list, replace the things you can't have with acceptable foods (i.e. if you have a packet of IP mashed potatoes you can bring it to replace the regular mashed, same goes for the cream of chicken soup which makes a perfect gravy replacement).

3 - Don't forget to find replacements for desserts too. Who can stick to one dessert at Christmas? Bring a small plate of various bars cut up into small pieces and allow yourself one thing on the dessert tray that is not too filled with sugar. For example, you can eat the cake part but leave the icing part of a piece of cake. This will not only serve to cut down on the sugar but also to make you feel as though you accomplished something good!

4 - Have a tea with your dessert, this will give you the feeling of fullness and complete your meal

nicely without adding calories.

Phase 4 tip...

Did I ever tell you that on your fun day you can have anything... not EVERYTHING! This statement has almost less to do with calories than it does with how you will feel after your big indulgence! So have fun at Christmas but be careful not to over do it. Your stomach isn't use to that kind of food anymore and you don't want to wake up on boxing day feeling like a train has run you over!

Today, we will put up the tree... a little late you might think... that is because we have a new cat and we don't know how she will react. Maybe the tree will scare her and we won't have to worry about her tipping it over. That chance however, is pretty remote so keep your fingers crossed for us!

Enjoy your Sunday! Thinking of you as always!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss



DAY 24 - A familiar story and a slice of my childhood... Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus!

We are all, no doubt, familiar with the famous editorial "Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus" but I wanted to tell you my version. When I grew up, we were not allowed to say there was no Santa Claus. In fact, when we would leave for church on Christmas eve, my mother would always say... "I wonder if the old Santa will come by" and she always said this using the same expression her dad did, calling Santa, "le vieux Sandy"! Even though, like all children, we reached the age where we knew full well that the presents under the tree came from our parents' hard earned money, we were not allowed to say so. The presents were from the old Sandy and that was that!

As my own kids grew up, I decided to keep this feeling alive. My kids asked me one year (when they were much too old to believe in Santa anymore) to tell them honestly if there was a Santa... And I told them that, the God's honest truth was that although Santa Claus likely didn't wear a red suit or traveled by sleight there was no denying that a piece of Santa Claus lived inside every person. That this was the only way I could ever explain the generous actions that I saw every day during this time of year.

Now that I have the privilege of working even more closely with people, I can attest to that truth all the more. People are generous throughout the year but even more so at Christmas time. We know that giving is the best gift of all!

So on that note, I have dug up the famous editorial with a bit of background for your enjoyment but also to thank you for all your support. Everyday when you read my email, you give me a reason to write one more the next day! I wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous and healthy New Year!

Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus

Editorial Page, New York Sun, 1897

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of The Sun: I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?
Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.

He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!!

From The People's Almanac, pp. 1358-9.

Francis P. Church's editorial, "Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus" was an immediate sensation, and became one of the most famous editorials ever written. It first appeared in the The New York Sun in 1897, over a hundred years ago, and was reprinted annually until 1949 when the paper went out of business.

Thirty-six years after her letter was printed, Virginia O'Hanlon recalled the events that prompted her letter:

"Quite naturally I believed in Santa Claus, for he had never disappointed me. But when less fortunate little boys and girls said there wasn't any Santa Claus, I was filled with doubts. I asked my father, and he was a little evasive on the subject.

"It was a habit in our family that whenever any doubts came up as to how to pronounce a word or

some question of historical fact was in doubt, we wrote to the Question and Answer column in *The Sun*. Father would always say, 'If you see it in *The Sun*, it's so,' and that settled the matter.

" 'Well, I'm just going to write *The Sun* and find out the real truth,' I said to father. "

"He said, 'Go ahead, Virginia. I'm sure *The Sun* will give you the right answer, as it always does.' "

And so Virginia sat down and wrote her parents' favorite newspaper. Her letter found its way into the hands of a veteran editor, Francis P. Church. Son of a Baptist minister, Church had covered the Civil War for *The New York Times* and had worked on the *The New York Sun* for 20 years, more recently as an anonymous editorial writer.

Church, a sardonic man, had for his personal motto, "Endeavour to clear your mind of cant." When controversial subjects had to be tackled on the editorial page, especially those dealing with theology, the assignments were usually given to Church.

Now, he had in his hands a little girl's letter on a most controversial matter, and he was burdened with the responsibility of answering it.

"Is there a Santa Claus?" the childish scrawl in the letter asked. At once, Church knew that there was no avoiding the question. He must answer, and he must answer truthfully. And so he turned to his desk, and he began his reply which was to become one of the most memorable editorials in newspaper history.

Church married shortly after the editorial appeared. He died in April, 1906, leaving no children.

Virginia O'Hanlon went on to graduate from Hunter College with a Bachelor of Arts degree at age 21. The following year she received her Master's from Columbia, and in 1912 she began teaching in the New York City school system, later becoming a principal. After 47 years, she retired as an educator. Throughout her life she received a steady stream of mail about her Santa Claus letter, and to each reply she attached an attractive printed copy of the Church editorial.

Virginia O'Hanlon Douglas died on May 13, 1971, at the age of 81, in a nursing home in Valatie, N.Y.

Tomorrow, most of us will be surrounded by loved ones. I shall have a thought for those who are not. My extraordinary mother-in-law will not be joining us this year and so my heart is a little sad. At 96 years young, she preferred to stay close to home this year to be with her nearly 98 years young sister! Her generosity knows no boundaries! Much like my parents have, she too has taught me a lot!

My thoughts and prayers are with you! I love you all dearly!

Sincerely,

Lise Hamilton-Carriere
Food-Wise Weight Loss

