

One Dent Doesn't Ruin the Car



Sherry slumped into the chair in my office. “What an awful week,” she moaned. “I totally blew it! I started out determined that I would stay on my diet, do my exercise and manage my stress.

But every single day, things at work built up and got to me. By the time I got home, I’d be upset and worn down from all the stress.

Before I knew it, I’d have a glass of wine in one hand and a bag of tortilla chips in the other. Once I’d blown it anyway, I’d figure I might as well wait and start my diet over tomorrow. So I’d eat whatever I wanted that night. Of course, none of it was on my diet plan.”

Caught in the cycle

Sherry continued, “I’m so discouraged. I’ve been trying so hard to lose weight. But instead of making progress, I’ve gained three pounds.

Please help me figure out how to get a handle on this. Otherwise, I’ll never lose any weight and by next year, I’ll be bigger than ever.”

I blew it!

As Sherry and I talked, she confessed that she often slips into saying “I blew it.” For example, last Friday night, Sherry and her friend met at her favorite Mexican cafe.

She said, “I just can’t seem to go there without having a margarita. Of course, once I finished it (as well as a bowl of chips and salsa) I didn’t care about my diet anymore. I figured that I’d already blown it and I’d have to start my diet over the next day anyway, so I might as well eat the entire meal.

What a shame! Instead of labeling an eating slip up as a minor event, Sherry allowed it to pull her off course entirely.

Whenever you say, “I blew it,” your brain hears, “That means I’m off my diet, so I might as well go ahead and eat more.”

Then you decide that since your diet is a lost cause anyway that it makes sense to give up entirely and start over the next day.

Here’s how Sherry described her punishing routine with food. “It’s as if I backed my car into a post. But instead of assessing the damage and driving away, I decide one dent isn’t enough. So to punish myself for my first mistake, I slam my car backward into the post again and again.”

Why one dent doesn’t ruin the car

Most of you wouldn’t punish yourself for the first dent by making the car worse. So don’t do this with food either. Instead, when you slip up on your diet plan tell yourself, “OK, I did that. It’s over. Now I can go back to taking care of myself.”

Stop saying “I blew it!”

Phrases such as “I blew it” emphasize feelings of discouragement and failure. Throw these out these old dieting lines and start using a kinder, more gentle voice when you talk to yourself.

Starting now, resolve that you’ll never say “I blew it” again in regard to your eating or your weight loss efforts.

Call it a PAUSE

Instead of treating an eating episode as a crisis, learn to view it as a minor event. A great way to do this is to refer to your eating problem as a “pause.” Think of it as a brief rest in your day. Say to yourself, “I had a little *pause* in my program. Now I’ll get back up and follow my plan again.”

Move forward, not backward

Any time you have a diet slip-up, don’t wait until the next day to take action. Simply ask yourself, “What’s next? What’s a healthy step I can take right now?”

Then quickly do something to overcome the minor dent in your program. Take a walk, eat a piece of fruit, or do something else that affirms you are following a healthy pattern.

And promise yourself that you’ll never again use the words, “I blew it” to describe a minor slip up on your diet.

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