

Real People Don't Diet



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“Stop dieting. Start eating!”

Other sites by Cate Brizzell:
www.home-budget-help.com
www.momsmakemoneyonline.com

DISCLAIMER

The material in this book is provided for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. The information contained in this book should not be used to diagnose or treat any illness, metabolic disorder, disease or health problem. Always consult your physician or health care provider before beginning any nutrition or exercise program. Use of the programs, advice, and information contained in this book is at the sole discretion, choice and risk of the reader.

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How To Use This Book

Ever bought exercise equipment? We have. Guess where it is now?

At the dump. In the basement. Given away.

Don't make the same mistake with this book. Don't just read it and toss it aside.

The information here is **different** from anything you've ever read before. Why? Because it's a personal story. A story of how my husband Chris and I lost over 60 pounds combined, as well as several inches.

I'm not out to give you medical advice. I don't know the latest nutritional research. I'm not familiar with any of the most recent fad diets and I won't address their pros and cons here. I simply believe diets don't work for the vast majority of people, and you can't convince me otherwise.

In fact, I really don't want to do anything other than share exactly what we did from June 2006 until January 2007, when the first edition of this book was published, to finally take our weight off and keep it off.

The strategies we used should work for you. We're Real People, and I'm assuming you're a Real Person, too. ☺

I also assume you want to lose weight and you bought this book in the hopes I could help you do just that. So give yourself a fair chance, read the book all the way through, and try our strategies!

I promise it'll be a lot easier than following that grapefruit diet!

Take a few simple steps now to keep human nature from getting in the way of your success. (Yes, I'm talking about our common tendency to get excited about something, start doing it and then never finish or follow through.)

Instead, consider the suggestions below and get a huge return on your investment in "Real People Don't Diet":

- ✓ **Print and read this book from cover to cover before you do anything**
- ✓ **Don't skip ahead—read each chapter in the order it was written**
- ✓ **Invest in a highlighter**
- ✓ **Keep this book handy for future reference**
- ✓ **Don't compare yourself to us...or anyone else, for that matter!**

I want to see you get what you paid for. We want to see you lose weight and keep it off!

PRINT

I tried to use a typeface and font size that would make it easy for you to read this book on your PC or laptop. However, you may still want to print the book and read it in hard-copy format. If you're looking to save ink or paper, then use your printer's special options to print multiple pages on one sheet of paper (most leading printers offer this feature).

Put your printed copy in a report cover or small binder that will protect the pages. You'll be referring to it often.

Another option is to save the book on a CD and take it to your local office store for printing and binding. Some may even have an online feature where you can upload the file and have the book ready and waiting when you arrive!

Don't forget the bonus booklets!

READ

Read through the entire book **before you do anything**. Read it start to finish. Don't skip ahead or jump around, because each chapter is important. Take advantage of your current excitement surrounding your purchase of this book—print NOW, read NOW, and FINISH the book.

If you skip around you might miss key information that will affect your ability to lose pounds and maintain your weight successfully.

And if you put this book down, you may never pick it back up again. That's just human nature.

HIGHLIGHT

It's not just for college any more! Keep a highlighter handy as you read. Highlight those passages or "a-ha!" nuggets that mean the most to you. Don't be afraid to write comments or ideas that come to you in the margins (another reason we used fairly large type).

Make this book your own. Personalize it! It will be the last book on weight loss you may ever need to read!

KEEP THE BOOK HANDY

Once you're done reading, don't put the book out of sight. Out of sight, out of mind! Instead, put the book wherever you're most likely to see it when you're thinking about food. Usually that means somewhere in the kitchen. I keep favorite cookbooks near the stove. Every time I look at them I'm inspired.

STOP COMPARING YOURSELF, PERIOD

You'll notice I never tell you what weight we started at, how much we weigh now, which dress size or waist size we are today, or any other type of identifying information.

Why not?

Because it won't inspire you. Instead, human nature will take over and you will compare yourself to us. If you don't end up the same size as us, or lose as much weight as we did in the same period of time, you will feel like a failure.

And if we didn't start at the same size as you, you'll think "Yeah, well, they don't know how I feel!"

Wrong. It's all relative.

We lost weight over six months implementing eating Real People eating strategies. You can, too. Forget how much weight you'll lose or how long it will take. Your ideal weight and figure may be a size 10. Someone else's could be a size 2 (yes, they do exist naturally).

If you can't stop comparing yourself to others and obsessing over dieting and food, then you'll never be able to eat like a Real Person and feel good about yourself. Be happy with who you are on the way to who you want to be. It sounds trite, but it really is true.

You'll always find someone who weighs more than you – and you can always find someone who weighs less.

Follow these tips, and we think you'll believe this book is one of the best investments you ever made!

Introduction

You bought this book because you want to lose weight. I'd bet money on the fact you've probably tried at least one diet, and likely more than one. I'm also sure you've tried a fat diet or two, like Atkins or South Beach or the grapefruit diet.

You may have tried packaged diet foods and/or diet plans that force you to buy their packaged foods.

Maybe you've tried counting calories or points. Meetings. Weigh-ins.

Now, I want to make one thing clear: I am **not** criticizing specific diet plans, foods or companies. I have friends and relatives that have lost weight using them, so I know they can work.

The problem is, all my friends and relative gained their weight back. Every single one of them. Why is that?

My theory is that you simply can't maintain diets, packaged diet foods or memberships for your entire life, so unless you adopt new eating habits that will allow you to maintain your new weight, you'll gain it all back.

Since bad food habits are the reason most of us gained weight in the first place, it stands to reason that we just go back to eating the same meals, drinking the same beverages, using the same ingredients, and serving up the same portions.

My life experience has convinced me of this: **DIETS DON'T WORK!**

I'm sure this isn't news to you.

Let's think about this logically for a moment. What is dieting? Depriving yourself of things you want to eat but can't, right? So how can any human being possibly be prepared to go through life—perhaps for 50 or 60 years or more—planning to deprive himself or herself of food?

Aren't humans programmed to satisfy hunger? We aren't programmed to ignore it. We aren't programmed to partially satisfy it.

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary at www.m-w.com, a diet is “a regimen of eating and drinking sparingly so as to reduce one's weight”.

Wow. Sounds like a good time to me!

Since we're thinking logically, now let me ask you a logical question:

If you plan to lose weight by “eating and drinking sparingly”, are you willing to keep “eating and drinking sparingly” for the rest of your life?

Is that really feasible?

No?

Then logically, we must assume the following:

- ✓ **Dieting is only a temporary solution**
- ✓ **Dieting cannot be sustained for a lifetime**
- ✓ **Real People Don't Diet...They Eat**

The vast majority of dieters do not experience long-term, lifetime results.

Real People enjoy many different types of foods (including foods that aren't necessarily healthy), have crazy nights where there's no time to cook, visit restaurants, crave desserts and occasionally overeat.

Real People have a hard time fitting exercise into their lives (even though we all know it should be a regular habit). Real People go on vacation, celebrate the holidays and have food budgets. Real People may have kids in the house—big or small—who don't need to “watch their weight”, probably don't like a whole lot of vegetables and most certainly don't want to eat cardboard meals (unless they're Lunchables).

So again, logically, let's conclude that a diet—of any form—is not the solution for permanent weight loss for Real People. Therefore, you need to accept the fact that you will not lose weight by dieting.

You **MUST** stop thinking diet, using the word diet, acting like you're on a diet, buying books about diets, and obsessing about diets. What I'm about to share with you **IS NOT A DIET!** Please don't treat it like one!

This should be good news to you! **You will never have to go on a diet again.**

But—you **will** have to develop a strategy for eating and drinking **the rest of your life**. It won't have to be “sparingly”. But it will have to be **different**.

The definition of insanity is “doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results”. Whatever you're eating and drinking now is obviously not helping you lose weight. You're going to have to make changes.

The key is to make changes you can live with, day in and day out. Changes that will work for Real People. Changes that don't feel like deprivation.

That's why we wrote this book. We finally unlocked the secret to how you can eat and drink foods you enjoy and still lose weight. Yes, there may be some foods you have to stop eating (or eat less of), but instead of **denying** yourself, you make trade-offs. You continue eating and drinking foods you enjoy. Your brain remains content with your food choices and you don't feel deprived.

You don't have to buy anything special, eat anything special, or spend more money (you may even find you spend even less at the grocery store each month).

You'll need a bit of self-discipline, but not as much as you'd expect, and certainly not as much as you need to diet!

In about thirty days, your new eating strategy will have become a habit, and you'll notice that your clothes are fitting a bit more loosely. (Results may vary, but that's about the time we started to notice a difference).

By the time you've lost tens of pounds and dropped a couple dress or waist sizes, you'll feel so great about how you look, you won't even think twice about your food choices any more. Our strategy will have become a habit, and the great results you're getting will only reinforce to your brain that your new eating habits are pleasurable. Absolutely nothing will taste as good as you feel—about the new, thinner you!

And here's the best news: because our eating strategy involves Real Food, Real Meals and Real Life Situations, you'll be able to implement it each and every time you lift your fork (or grab a glass).

So let's get started...

Chapter 1

Why We Wrote This Book

In May of 2006 I was disgusted with how I felt and how much I weighed.

I was 37, the mother of three great kids, and I weighed more than I ever had before (okay, except while pregnant).

Ditto for my husband.

It's not that we were obese. Far from it. I'm petite and naturally small-boned, so most people didn't notice my "rolls" until I sat down and they suddenly appeared. Like a big spare tire.

Instead, we just knew we were anywhere from 15-50 pounds over our natural weight, the weight where we felt comfortable in our clothes, where we had tons of energy, where we were active and felt great about ourselves.

Anyway, I had recently seen a picture of myself sitting down, and noticed a "spare tire" had appeared. I've always been described as "skinny", so it was quite a shock.

Not that we shouldn't have expected it. We overate at practically every meal, and had zero energy. We didn't like how we looked or felt. Even worse, our clothes weren't fitting right. Since we had a tight budget, we knew it was time to either change how we looked, or take out a loan to buy a new wardrobe!

I'm not an overly emotional person, but I did realize that I was attached to certain foods. I would eat those foods as though I'd never get the chance to eat them

again. I guess that's why the definition of gluttony ties it in to fear: fear that you'll never get this kind of food again, so you have to eat as much as you can in the time you have!

One morning in May I was cleaning the kitchen while my favorite morning show was on TV. They were interviewing a celebrity chef named George Stella, one with a show on the Food Network. He'd been obese and very sick, in fear for his life; then he began eating low-carb (or practically no-carb). He lost hundreds of pounds. His overweight wife and sons slimmed down, too. As a family, they looked—and obviously felt—terrific.

(See Appendix B for a list of books and DVD's by George Stella, all available at Amazon.com.)

I was drawn in. We'd never really tried fad diets before, but had attempted to lose weight in the past with a mishmash of strategies. The only thing we'd ever had success with was "[The Fountain Of Youth](#)", a book from 1998.

Naturally, since diets don't work, we'd gained all the weight back. But we did begin some healthy habits thanks to the book. We drank skim milk, ate steamed broccoli regularly, used whole-grain breads, bought all-fruit instead of jellies or jams, and so on.

But we were still getting fatter! I just couldn't figure it out.

Since some of our friends had lost weight eating low-carb, I listened to what the celebrity chef had to say. He talked about foods you **could** eat instead of foods you **couldn't**.

I was pretty “anti-low-carb” at the time, thinking it seemed an unhealthy way to live. Those I knew who dieted that way never ate breads, ate way too much meat and eggs, and seemed generally unhappy most of the time (let’s be honest).

Still, I was drawn to the entrée the chef was preparing on TV, as well as the foods he was highlighting. It was “regular” food. You know, the kind Real People eat.

I was so inspired I went out and bought the chef’s cookbook, called “Stella Style”. Even though most of the recipes were easy and delicious, they were still a bit too drastically low-carb for my family. With three kids in grade school (none of whom had weight issues), it was impossible to keep carbs out of our kitchen. No macaroni and cheese? I may as well have told my kids there was no Santa Claus.

Not only that, but there were certain foods I loved that were “off limits” on the no-carb diet, like mashed potatoes. I couldn’t imagine giving them up entirely. And how could we go more than two weeks without spaghetti and meatballs?

If I had to lose 300 pounds to survive, I would be willing to give up mashed potatoes. But not eating any carbs at all, or very few, seemed a little extreme in order to lose 15 pounds, or even 50 pounds.

And wasn’t there such a thing as “good carbs” that provide energy and required nutrients?

I read the chef’s cookbook from cover to cover, used recipes and tweaked some to include “just a few” carbs, instead of no-carbs. I learned some neat tips and

techniques for reducing or avoiding carbs when it came to preparing certain foods.

I realized this chef and his family simply took foods and meals they loved and just adapted them to fit a lower-carb lifestyle. By not giving up what they loved and simply making a few trade-offs, they ate happily and dropped pounds.

The book inspired me to realize that I could still cook “normal” foods, but would have to make a few adjustments to simply lower the carbs—nothing drastic, nothing difficult, and nothing expensive.

Still, it looked and felt, and smelled and tasted, like a “diet”...and I just “knew” a diet wouldn’t work.

My husband Chris and I started talking about it one evening. We decided we needed to do something. We were convinced that reducing carbs would do the trick. But we needed to figure out a way to do it every day, without needing lists or expensive ingredients or wacky foods the kids wouldn’t eat. We also didn’t think “low-carb” was the way to go. We were thinking more like “lower-carb”. There had to be a way!

That night we came up with a strategy. Our weight-loss journey began. We discovered immediately that adopting this new strategy was easier than we expected.

Right away we began to notice a difference. In about two weeks we had lost our craving for sugars!

Since we didn't own a scale, we couldn't weigh ourselves. But within a week or two we noticed our clothes were fitting more loosely. Our faces looked thinner. We had more energy and were sleeping better.

As fate would have it, just a couple weeks after our decision, we went on vacation. Think you can't lose weight on vacation? Think again! We ate out for almost every meal, had a blast, and arrived home thinner than we did when we left!

(See your bonus report "Real People Go On Vacation" for specifics on how you can vacation and lose weight at the same time.)

Two-and-a-half years, three family vacations and three holiday seasons later, we've lost some serious weight.

How much? Chris has lost 60 pounds as of this writing, and two waist sizes. He's maintained his normal weight for about a year-and-a-half. I've dropped two waist sizes and at least two dress sizes and maintained my weight as well. We've both had to buy some new wardrobe items, but I have to admit it's a lot more fun to shop for **smaller** sizes!

Even better, we get compliments from friends and family on how great we look. I'd like to say it doesn't matter, but the truth is, it does. Who doesn't like to get compliments? Who doesn't want to be told they look fantastic? Don't kid yourself. You want it, too.

We've found our eating plan requires very little self-discipline or effort. We made a decision, took it one meal at a time, and now we've built habits that we believe will last a lifetime.

We've noticed our kids have naturally adopted our habits as well. Without being told, they regulate their eating habits and make healthier food decisions.

Our motivation is simple. We don't want to go back to the way we looked or felt before. As George Stella says, "Nothing tastes as good as thin feels". No food is worth being overweight again.

So why did I write this book?

Near the end of 2006, when it became obvious we had both lost a lot of weight, the same friends and family that told us how great we looked also asked "How did you do it?". And so we told them. Over and over.

Finally, someone said, "You should write a book." I started to realize that telling our story could help people the world over. My friend Leo helped me out, experienced as he is with writing and distributing e-books online.

And now you hold in your hands the true story of our quest to lose weight and keep it off for good. We sincerely hope our story changes your life, and we look forward to hearing your "real" success stories!

Chapter 2

The Formula

That night we'd decided that reducing carbs was probably the easiest way to lose weight. But we weren't sure a low-carb or no-carb lifestyle was the way to do it. Let's face it: Real People like—and need to eat—carbs!

According to Wikipedia.org, the American Academy of Family Physicians defines a “low-carb” diet this way:

“Low-carbohydrate diets restrict caloric intake by reducing the consumption of carbohydrates to 20 to 60 g per day (typically less than 20 percent of the daily caloric intake).”

That's not a lot of carbs!

Suddenly I remembered something my friend Leo had done to lose weight. He had a simple plan. If he took in fewer calories per day, he'd have to lose weight – mathematically. Exercising would only boost his efforts.

His weight-loss method didn't appeal to us because counting calories is difficult to do. You don't always know the caloric count for what you're eating, especially if you don't prepare it yourself, or if you're dealing with fresh foods, like fruit and vegetables.

But Leo lost weight with his formula, and mathematically, it just seemed foolproof.

So it suddenly hit us both: why not apply the same concept to carbs? If we took in fewer carbs each day, then we **MUST** lose weight! It would be impossible not to! The answer was a “lower-carb” approach, not “low-carb”.

My husband’s logical mind and my desire for simple, do-able lifestyle change instead of dieting brought about what we call “The Real People Formula”:

IF YOU EAT AND DRINK FEWER CARBS AT EVERY MEAL, YOU WILL LOSE WEIGHT.

No meal planning, counting or exotic ingredients. No charts, lists or menus.

Just to emphasize once again, “fewer” carbs didn’t automatically mean “low-carb”. For most of us, it would take quite a bit of change and self-discipline to eat a low-carb diet. But anyone can make teeny, tiny adjustments downward in the amount of carbs consumed at each meal.

We started by trying to cut carbs with just one food item per meal. Once we found that easy to do, we cut carbs from a second item, and so on, until we reached the point where we were comfortable cutting out all the carbs we really didn’t want or need.

Here’s an example using McDonald’s, our favorite fast-food restaurant. We would typically order a Quarter Pounder Meal Deal, which included a burger, medium fries and medium Coke. Following our formula and taking it one item at a time, we started by switching our Coke to an unsweetened iced tea. That wasn’t too hard, because we really like iced tea. Doing this dropped a staggering 58 grams of carbs from the meal. Unsweetened iced tea has 0 grams of carbs.

Next time, we ate only half the fries and threw the rest away. That dropped another 24 carbs.

Then we started ordering just the burgers, eating no fries but having a 4-piece Chicken McNuggets on the side, and iced tea. There goes another 24 carbs.

Were we eating a low-carb meal? Not if you call a Quarter Pounder and some fries “low carb”. But did we lose weight? Yep.

Here’s the grand total on a Quarter Pounder Extra-Value Meal before we made any changes: 40g burger + 48g fries + 58g Coke = 146 grams of carbs.

Here’s the grand total with all our changes: 40g burger + 11g four McNuggets = 54 carbs.

That’s a net loss of 92 carbs! In one meal! And we still ate at McDonald’s, still ate a burger, and still ate McNuggets! (If we crave fries, we steal one or two from the kids’ meals.)

By the way, if you like to eat at McDonald’s, their website has a neat little program that lets you choose any combination of items from their menu and then see the nutrition information (including carbs) for your entire meal. It’s called “Bag a McMeal” and you can find it here:

<http://nutrition.mcdonalds.com/bagamcmeal/bagMeal.do>

Would we have lost weight faster if we’d switched the burger to grilled chicken and avoided eating the sides of the bun? Yup. But we really wanted to eat a burger. 😊

Wouldn't it have been healthier and "no-carb" to just eat a salad and drink water?
Yeah. But then...why go to a fast food joint in the first place?

Wouldn't most diets recommend you not visit McDonald's at all? Sure they would.

But doesn't our strategy sound a lot more fun than a diet?

We also knew—after a few years of marriage, work, kids, home, etc.—that if we didn't make our weight loss strategy simple, affordable and easy to fit into our lifestyle, it wouldn't have a chance of becoming a habit.

For us, that meant we would never be able to eat low-fat, count calories or do Weight Watchers points. Not because those are off-base or wrong—but because doing so would **not** fit into our lifestyle. We wouldn't keep it up forever. So we wouldn't lose weight and keep it off forever.

But eating fewer carbs every time you sit down (or drive-thru)? That's something Real People can do.

There are only two requirements: being aware of how many carbs there are in the foods you eat, and making the choice to substitute lower-carb choices for some of those foods. You might think the choice to go for lower-carb options requires self-discipline, but it really doesn't. If you use the "carrot-and-stick" method we adopted, you'll gladly give up the carbs you can live without in order to enjoy the carbs you enjoy most. I'll explain more later.

Throughout this book we'll give you examples of strategies we used to quickly gain the knowledge we needed to implement the Formula, with amazing success.

Not convinced? Already tried a “low-carb” diet and it didn’t work for you? Think this is just a re-hashed version of the Atkins diet?

Then think of it this way: you can eat a lot more than 20-60 carbs a day (the true definition of a “low carb” diet) but all you have to do is eat fewer carbs each day than you’re already taking in.

If you looked in our fridge right now, you wouldn’t find a single slice of bacon or steak. You also wouldn’t find more than a couple dozen eggs or so. If we do eat eggs, we always include a slice of lean toast or one-half an English muffin with all-fruit.

There aren’t any diet products or sugar-free products in our pantry, either, because we don’t like to do chemical sweeteners. Our snack cabinet has tortilla chips, Fritos, pretzels and popcorn. We eat Maple and Brown Sugar Mini-Wheats for breakfast and enjoy hot fudge sundaes for dessert.

Our personal diet is healthier than ever—we rarely get sick. We don’t feel faint and we aren’t hungry all the time, contrary to what low-carb naysayers like to point out.

Our cholesterol numbers have dropped anywhere from 20 to 30 points over the last two years, meaning we’re at lower risk for heart disease.

Our secret, and our plan for losing weight, is entirely based on our own experience, and we’ve been able to maintain it for two-and-a-half years. I hope you can agree that our approach is different from anything you’ve tried before. And I also hope you agree that it has a lot of potential to work in your own life!

So, now that you know the Formula, let’s explore how it will work for you.

Meals

We started by trying to reduce carbs for just **one** item at each meal. Now, we try to reduce as many carbs as possible, across all items and ingredients. Yet, we still eat foods we enjoy.

One of the easiest ways to reduce carbs at every meal is to change how you distribute portions. Double veggies and meat and cut starches by one-half. Or, distribute all your portions into thirds (e.g. one-third spaghetti, one-third meatballs, one-third salad). This simple strategy allows you to reduce carbs (and lose weight) without changing what it is you're eating. All you're doing is adjusting amounts!

Of course, if you do decide to change meal items or ingredients to lower-carb options, you'll speed up the weight-loss process even more.

Here are some suggestions on how to change up your meals to include fewer carbs:

Pasta

Always serve with meat or meat sauce. Feel free to add cheese. Serve pasta on the side instead of making it the main dish. Try whole wheat or "smart" pasta. We recommend Barilla's whole wheat variety. They look brown in the box but they cook up and taste like regular pasta—no cardboard box flavor. Fill a big bowl of salad or your favorite raw veggies and eat right along with the pasta and meat. Make sure to use a salad dressing that's tasty and low in carbs (Caesar is our favorite).

Casseroles

Increase meat ingredients by 50% and decrease pasta ingredients by 50%. Your casseroles will just get saucier! Always cook up large servings of steamed

veggies to go along with the casserole, and enjoy a salad, if possible. Use lots of shredded cheese—it's tasty, it's filling, it's high in calcium and it's low in carbs.

Meats and Starches

Personally, I find it very difficult to eat steak or chicken without a starch. During the summer, corn on the cob or fresh veggies on the grill can do the trick. But during the colder weather, I crave mashed potatoes. I solve the problem by having potatoes but in a smaller portion than I used to enjoy.

If you're really looking to eliminate carbs, boil up some cauliflower and mash it like potatoes. Or add mashed cauliflower to mashed potatoes for a half-and-half mixture.

Try making mashed potatoes with skim milk and some cream cheese or sour cream. They'll be just as creamy and a bit lower in carbs and fats.

You can also try a baked potato (really good for you) or bake red potatoes with the skin left on, coated with olive oil and sprinkled with parmesan cheese.

If you're craving starches, always include a large portion of steamed, crunchy vegetables. These will help satisfy your craving and make it easier for you to eat a smaller portion of starch (or none at all). Topping with cheese helps, too.

Veggies

A lot of low-carb diets restrict starchy vegetables like peas and corn. I think that's nuts! Veggies are good for you, period. So we eat them without limits. Of course, we don't add sauces or even butter. But we do enjoy them as often as possible.

Try eating veggies as crunchy and close to fresh as possible. My favorite method is steaming in the microwave. You can either use the brand new steam-in-a-bag varieties available or simply put frozen vegetables in a glass dish and microwave (don't add water). Always season with pepper, parmesan cheese, or other flavors that zest your veggies up.

Another great way to add flavor to veggies is to brush them with zesty Italian dressing and grill over indirect heat, or saute with garlic and onions and a bit of butter (you can add frozen veggies directly to the skillet). Tasty!

Avoid canned vegetables. If you check the labels, you'll find that in a vast majority of cases sugar has been added. Yuck! Not only that, but peas from a can look gray, while peas from a frozen package look green...enough said.

Desserts

We don't serve desserts at home, unless it's a special occasion or holiday. We reserve them for dining out. Then, we indulge as freely as we would like, especially if we've reduced carbs with our meal and avoided alcoholic or carb-heavy beverages. If at all possible, we choose sugar-free desserts, but if we can't—heck, the sugar tastes great.

The biggest favor you can do for yourself is to chuck the cookies, cakes and ice cream from your pantry or freezer. Out of sight, out of mind.

If you crave sweets and chocolate, one of the best solutions I've found is to have chocolate graham crackers on hand. Take out 2-3 crackers, put them on a plate, and enjoy them as your dessert with milk or coffee. You'll be taking in a lot fewer carbs and fats. Still dessert, still chocolatey, but you'll be losing weight as you eat them, instead of the other way around.

Drinks

Cut down on soda. Period. There's no other way around it. Eliminating one can of soda from your diet each day is a net loss of around 60 grams of carbs!

As a former Coke-a-day drinker, nothing sped up my weight loss as much as banishing the red can from my fridge. Surprisingly, it wasn't that hard. Every once in a while I'll have a Coke or Dr. Pepper if there are no other drinks available, and I find it's now too sweet for me. I don't enjoy it like I used to.

Get in the habit of drinking water, seltzer or iced tea (unsweetened), especially when eating out. You'll be surprised to find you crave ice water after a few weeks away from sugary drinks. Now when I have soda or lemonade I can barely get it down. It's way too sweet for me, and I literally don't feel well after drinking it.

We've always served our coffee black, so we didn't have to deal with cutting down on cream and sugar. We also like flavored coffee, which seems to lend it a sort of sweetness. If you don't like coffee served black, try drinking flavored coffee with half the cream and sugar you're used to adding. Then try using skim milk. Then try a sugar substitute (stevia is best for you). As you start to lose weight, you'll find you really don't mind the change that much!

Alcoholic beverages are loaded with carbs. We don't drink often, but when we do, we only fill the wine glass halfway, or enjoy low-carb beer. Studies have shown red wine can provide health benefits, but only if consumed in moderation.

Watch out for smoothies! Just before we started our Real People Don't Diet strategy, I was making them once a day, thinking I was doing myself a healthy favor. My smoothies consisted of: organic vanilla yogurt, frozen strawberries, frozen blueberries, a bit of milk and ice. Imagine my surprise when I started to gain weight! Once we began our new "fewer carbs" strategy, I checked the label

on the yogurt, and was shocked to find it was very high in sugar **and** carbs! I immediately stopped buying and eating yogurt—and making smoothies. While the smoothies themselves may have been “healthy”, all the extra sugar was causing me to gain weight. Now, I just eat fresh strawberries and blueberries in a bowl with whipped cream, or blend them together with a bit of skim milk.

Snacks

Snacks are very important! They take the edge off hunger between meals, and they keep your metabolism cooking all throughout the day. I homeschool my three kids, and we have a regular morning snacktime of 10:30 a.m. and afternoon snacktime at 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. We also enjoy snacks after dinner.

What types of snacks are best? I’m sure it isn’t news to you that fruit and veggies are best. But I find that snacks with protein and fiber work great for suppressing appetite, which leads to overeating at mealtime. Sometimes I’m still so full from my morning snack I have to try and work up an appetite for lunch.

We knew that avoiding snacks altogether wouldn’t work (not with kids in the house). So we selected a few varieties that we would routinely buy, and we don’t deviate from this list, except on special occasions. Here’s what you’ll find in our “snack cabinet” or fridge:

- Tortilla chips (great as nachos with shredded Mexican cheese blend, melted)
- Pretzels (with no corn syrup)
- Triscuits (flavored but without MSG)
- Fritos
- Chocolate or regular graham crackers
- Cheddar cheese
- Popcorn kernels
- Baby carrots
- Peanut butter
- Bananas
- Apples

Notice there are no cookies or ice cream or desserts listed!

Real People eat snacks. So let yourself enjoy them, including sweet and salty options. Just make sure your snacks are lower in carbs than what you've been enjoying previously.

One quick personal note: I particularly like Fritos. Instead of grabbing fistfuls as usual, I eat them one a time while slowly savoring the salty taste. I'll pour out a handful instead of eating right from the bag. I usually have a glass of water with them, too, which fills me up. I find that just a few Fritos will satisfy my hunger. When I checked the label on the Fritos bag I noticed a typical serving size was much greater than what I'd been enjoying, and yet still featured a reasonable number of carbs.

I realize a medical doctor or diet expert wouldn't recommend snacking on Fritos. But I do, and I've lost weight and kept it off. So that's that.

When approaching each and every meal, if you just keep the "Real People Don't Diet" math formula in mind, you'll cut your carbs (even by a little bit), and **you WILL lose weight!**

Before we move on, I think it's important to mention that we experienced some terrific unexpected side effects from our "Real People" approach to lower-carb eating.

First, we found that our new habit of moderating carbs always led to moderating portions as well. Our appetites naturally decreased and we just couldn't eat as much as we used to. Second helpings are pretty rare at our house. That means great leftovers for lunch the next day!

Secondly, we found that moderating our eating habits somehow led us to moderate our other habits. We began to desire to simplify. I don't know the psychological reasons behind this, but it happened.

We started resting more and playing more. We simplified our schedules and cleaned out clutter. Instead of wanting "more, more, more" when it came to food—and other things—we wanted "less, less, less".

Third, we began to actually feel healthier. We became more sensitive to changes in our bodies after consuming certain foods. Issues with infections, skin irritations, constipation and diarrhea went away. Whenever we did eat sugar, we could immediately feel our bodies react—and it didn't feel all that great. As our brains began to tell us sugar didn't feel good, our bodies began to crave it less.

We don't have scientific proof of this, but we also found that as we reduced carbs, we sped up our metabolism. Now, when we **do** eat "bad" carbs, our body doesn't absorb them like it used to. Because food is eliminated more often and more efficiently, the "bad" carbs aren't converting to fats like before. In other words, that occasional hot-fudge sundae isn't hurting us as much in the "fat department" as it used to!

We never have that "heavy" or "sleepy" feeling after eating, even a large meal like Thanksgiving dinner. I wouldn't classify our diet as "low-carb", yet we are reaping the benefits of a low-carb lifestyle. Moderation is key!

Fourth, we noticed our kids started noticing how we were eating. They became curious about carbs and started asking, "How many carbs are in this, Mom?" Now, they make food choices that mimic ours—so we know they're eating healthier as well.

Finally, and maybe most appealing to you, we found that we eliminated guilt from our eating habits. This broke the cycle of dieting off our lives once and for all. I am convinced that eating habits are usually rooted in emotions, which explains why women (who tend to be more emotional than men) struggle with weight loss issues to a greater extent than men. When your eating isn't controlled by your emotions, but is simply something you need to do to keep your body running, you tend to focus less on what it is you're eating. Food choices will become mechanical, and you'll probably find you eat less and make better choices.

Remember the Formula:

Eat fewer carbs at every meal and you WILL lose weight!

Now, a word of warning before we get into further details.

DO NOT tell a soul what you're doing. You know what will happen when you share your new plan to lose weight.

You'll get advice. You'll get warnings. You'll get Aunt Fanny's story on how she tried a low-carb diet and failed miserably, fainted and got carried off to the hospital. You'll hear how "eating anything with high fat will give you heart disease" and "any diet that doesn't avoid fats is unhealthy". Someone else will tell you how "all that red meat is going to kill you someday". You'll be deluged with so much negative input you'll find it hard to keep going!

You may even get reminders of your past failures.

Anything anyone has to say is nothing but static. You're not doing a diet. You're doing math and continuing to eat real food.

You aren't going to suddenly begin binging on high-fat food! You aren't going to eat bacon every day or eggs at every meal! You won't live on steak and green beans and you won't be eating raw butter pats for a snack.

Other than consulting with your doctor, which you should always do if you plan to lose weight, keep your plans to yourself.

No one can argue with results. So get result first, and then spill the beans!

Now that you have the basics down, let's get into more detail on how you can eat like a "real" person and still lose weight!

Chapter 3

Low-Carb Basics

We'd never eaten low-carb before, so we got most of our initial information from George Stella's cookbook and website. We instinctively knew that most starches meant higher carbs.

The only other thing we did to educate ourselves regarding carbs was to begin reading labels. We started checking the labels on everything we ate. We looked at the lines detailing carbs, sugars and fiber—that's it. (I was also concerned with preservatives and chemicals as well as trans fats, but that's unrelated to weight loss. More on those concepts later.)

If a label showed a lot of carbs and a lot of sugar, without a lot of fiber, we dropped that ingredient or food item or found a substitute. If an item had a lot of carbs but was also high in fiber, like Kellogg's Maple and Brown Sugar Mini-Wheats, which we eat for breakfast nearly every day, then we knew it contained a lot of "good" carbs and went right ahead and ate it.

We considered any fruit or vegetable to be "good" and ate as many as we wanted.

But in case you aren't familiar with carbs, or carbohydrates, let me provide some information here that will be helpful to you as you begin using the "Real People Don't Diet" formula.

What are carbs?

Carbohydrates, or “carbs” for short, contain glucose that your body’s metabolism converts into needed energy. Your body uses that energy to keep all its functions working properly.

Carbs also regulate the amount of sugar in your blood (which explains why diabetics shouldn’t eat a lot of carbs), provide food for the friendly bacteria in your intestines that aid digestion, assist in the absorption of calcium, and lower cholesterol and regulate blood pressure.

However, there’s a great deal of difference between “good” carbs and “bad” carbs. It’s the carbs that are indigestible—high in fiber—that reduce cholesterol and blood pressure. Not donuts!

Not eating enough carbohydrates can be dangerous. Your body will go into a state of ketosis and literally start eating its own muscles (using protein stored there).

So how do carbs end up becoming fat? Well, your body’s cells are amazing little things. They know exactly how much glucose they need to maintain their optimal energy level. Any extra carbohydrates are converted into fatty tissue.

This explains why everyone’s metabolism is different. It also explains why low-carb diets work for some and not for others. It proves that you shouldn’t go with a strict regimen or guidelines regarding how many carbs you “should” consume each day. Instead, you have to gradually reduce carbs until you find the happy medium that works for your own weight and health.

If you want more information, this succinct little web page at Dummies.com is great:

<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/carbohydrates-do-more-than-make-energy-for-your-bo.html>

(I'm not calling you a dummy, either...I found it while googling.)

What exactly are “good” carbs versus “bad” carbs?

“Good” carbs are high in fiber and have a low glycemic index (which simply means they stabilize blood sugars and insulin production). They include:

- ✓ **vegetables**
- ✓ **fruits**
- ✓ **beans**
- ✓ **legumes**
- ✓ **nuts**
- ✓ **seeds**
- ✓ **whole grains**

Note that highly-processed vegetables and fruits can be a poor choice if they're loaded with sugar and salt. Eat either fresh or frozen.

“Bad” carbs are fairly obvious. They include:

- ✓ **refined, bleached and enriched flour**
- ✓ **white sugar**

Most desserts, baked goods, pastas, snack foods and sodas are high in “bad” carbs. There's no getting around it: you **do** have to eat fewer of these foods in order to lose weight.

Real People have to eat **SOME** carbs—but they should eat a lot more “good” carbs than “bad” carbs!

Does a lower-carb diet really work?

I need to qualify here—once again—that our strategy is **NOT** “low-carb”. We believe in **lowering** your overall carb intake, or a “lower-carb” lifestyle. Mathematically, you need to reduce the number of carbs you’re taking in each day in order to lose weight. Obviously, the more carbs you reduce, the more weight you’ll lose, but once you reach a certain point, lowering carbs becomes a **low-carb** or **no-carb** diet, and we believe that’s simply impossible to maintain for a lifetime (there are always exceptions).

Our “lower-carb” strategy would look a lot different for Lance Armstrong than it does for us. He could probably set a limit of 200-250 carbs a day and maintain his weight without any problems, whereas anything more than 100 a day seems to make us gain weight, because we aren’t burning the glucose in our carbohydrates at the same rate he does.

So back to your question. ☺ How did Chris and I know that reducing our carbs versus reducing our calories or fats would work best? The answer: we didn’t know! We just figured it was easier to control carbs versus calories or fats, and it was worth a try. The rapidity of our success, and the fact we’ve been able to maintain it without giving up one single food we really love, is what surprised us.

In doing research for this book, I uncovered two recent studies that prove low-carb weight-loss works faster than low-fat strategies, although both strategies had the same results. Both studies were published in a 2004 edition of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

The first is a study by Duke University:

<http://www.dukehealth.org/HealthLibrary/News/7598>

The second is a study by the Veteran Affairs Medical Center:

<http://www.abc.net.au/science/news/stories/s1110039.htm>

While the lower-carb and low-fat groups lost the same amount of weight in the end, the lower-carb groups lost weight **faster**.

Since it's easier to control carbs than fat, and since weight loss happens faster when you reduce carbs, these studies just confirmed what Chris and I had already learned—that lowering carbs is really the easiest way to lose weight. It's simple, and it happens faster than any other method I know of (except starvation, which is **really** not wise).

Of course, the difference between Chris and I and the subjects in these studies is that **we didn't go on a diet!** And neither should you. When you're done reading this book you'll never diet again, because you'll simply use carb-lowering strategies to keep eating the foods you like, take your extra weight off and keep it off, for the rest of your life.

How do I know how many carbs are in the foods I eat?

This is the #1 question I get from e-mailers. I didn't include a carb chart in the first edition of "Real People Don't Diet" because we didn't use one. As I said before, we just naturally reduced starches or checked food labels.

But since there are so many of you asking, here's a website that will provide handy charts (and other low-carb info) that will get you started:

<http://lowcarb.bellaonline.com>

Just click on “Carb Charts” to the left.

You can also pick up handy carb reference guides at the checkout line in your supermarket, if you like. A lot of my readers say that once they’ve used these guides for a few weeks, they really don’t need them any more.

Check Appendix B at the end of this book for a list of useful low-carb references, books and cookbooks along with links to buy them at Amazon.com.

How many carbs a day should I consume in order to lose weight?

The answer is incredibly simple: **less** than you've been consuming lately!

If you're looking for a specific goal or target number of carbs, I just can't give you that. You have to take into account metabolic rate, physical activity, medications and medical conditions, and other factors.

I think it makes more sense to begin by reducing carbs by one item at each meal, then progress to two, and so on, until you feel comfortable with your weight loss and the amount of carbs you're eating each day.

You'll know when you start consuming too few carbs. It doesn't happen often, but I can tell when I haven't had enough carbs. I'll feel a bit light-headed, ravenous and a little weak. (Usually this happens because I'm so busy I forget to eat or I eat late. Sometimes it's because I didn't eat enough carbs or protein with a meal.) Those Maple and Brown Sugar Mini-Wheats are terrific for a quick dose of healthy, useful carbs. With its high fiber, the cereal also curbs my hunger.

If you're really a numbers person and insist on having a goal, I would shoot for removing 25-50 carbs per meal (including beverage). Aim for another 10-20 carbs with each snack. That gives you a 75-to-150-carb reduction each day. Then go down from there if you feel it's possible.

How do I know which carbs to cut first?

Let me share what we did.

Once we learned more about carbs and how many were in the things we typically ate, we looked for the biggest "carb culprits" in our diet, to see where we could get the most "bang for our buck" – eliminate items with the highest carbs right off the bat.

Surprisingly, we found it in our drinks, not our diet.

We had been very proud of the fact we were able to exercise self-control and discipline and drink only one can of Coke a day. The rest of the day we drank plain water or cans of flavored seltzer (no sugars or preservatives).

Have you ever read the label on a can of Coke?

You'll find that each 12 oz. can contains 40 grams of carbohydrates. That's an awful lot of carbs to consume before you even begin to **eat** anything. And all of those carbs come from sugar!

Yep. Not good.

We started our eating strategy by getting rid of the Coke, and never missed it one bit.

Next, we decided to analyze breakfast, the first meal of the day. As I've already mentioned, earlier that year I thought I'd try to lose weight by having "smoothies" for breakfast and lunch. You know now that the sugars and carbs in the yogurt and milk were too high, and obviously more carbohydrates than my body needed, because they were ending up in those fatty stores around my middle section!

Have you ever started a New Year's diet or fad diet by eating yogurt and granola for lunch? Even non-fat yogurt? And you never seemed to lose weight?

Well, now you know why. (Check out how many carbs and sugars there are in granola! And yogurt!)

Let me qualify one thing here: if a food item is high in carbs or sugars but also high in fiber, it's likely more "good" carbs than "bad" carbs.

I decided to get my probiotics (the real benefit of yogurt) and calcium (from the milk and yogurt) in capsule format and skip the sugar. I also got calcium from steamed broccoli and my favorite breakfast cereal, Kellogg's Maple and Brown Sugar Mini-Wheats.

We ditched the yogurt. I put berries on cereal or ate them for dessert, and immediately began to lose weight. It tasted just as good, and frankly, was a lot easier to clean up than that blender!

What are the carb lessons here?

Don't just examine foods. Consider your favorite drinks as well. (Don't forget that alcoholic drinks are high in carbs.)

Also, get in the habit of checking all your food labels for carbs. If you enjoy two different types of bread, which one has fewer carbs? Which pasta? Which sauce? Which salad dressing? Which soup?

Constantly look for an option with lower carbs that will still satisfy your cravings and hunger. As long as you're choosing something with fewer carbs than you used to eat or drink, you **will** drop pounds.

One final note on "low-carb" diet foods: sometimes they're just "gross". We tried a low-carb bread that was gummy and tasteless. Blech. Following our strategy to always provide satisfaction and contentment while eating, we switched to a local bakery's seedless rye bread that has only 9 grams of carbs per slice. Yum!

Low-carb or no-carb foods won't work if you can't stand to eat them. Just skip it.

I don't get it. How do I "cut carbs" and still get to eat the foods I like?

There are three ways you can accomplish the Real People Don't Diet formula. Even better, you can use two or more to turbo-charge the carb-cutting (and weight loss) while still eating those foods!

The first way to cut carbs is **elimination**. This doesn't mean you eliminate the food entirely (although in some cases you may have to, especially if it's incredibly unhealthy or a food you can live without). You can eliminate a certain ingredient, a specific brand, or a method of preparation.

For example, my mom always used to serve casseroles fresh from the oven with bread crumbs on top. Instead of bread crumbs, I top them with cheese, or serve them from a skillet without baking at all. The casseroles taste the same and are actually much saucier! I still eat the casserole but eliminated the 20 carbs or so the bread crumbs provided.

The second way to cut carbs is **substitution**. If you're the kind of person that enjoys puzzles, you'll have fun using your creativity to come up with carb substitutions for the foods you love. Substitute foods themselves, ingredients, brands, preparation methods, and more.

A great example of this is tomato soup. Tomato soup is legendary in my family. It must be a Depression-era thing, but a lot of the recipes in my mom's family feature tomato soup as the main ingredient: chili, goulash, and so on. I check the label on everything, so was stunned to learn that condensed tomato soup contains a heck of a lot of sugar and carbs. I decided to try making the same recipes with tomato sauce instead. Guess what I found out? They taste the

same! And tomato sauce has very few carbs, if any. Tomato sauce has a lot more “tomato” in it, which means you get more of those helpful lycopenes, too.

The third way to cut carbs is **reduction**. You can reduce the amount of a certain ingredient, reduce portions or reduce frequency of consumption. This is really the easiest, simplest and least painful way to cut carbs, in my opinion!

A very simple way to reduce portions is to divide your plate into thirds. Make sure all pastas and starches are no more than 1/3 of your plate. Fill the other 2/3 with veggies or meats.

I reduce the amount of pasta in most of my recipes. I reduce all portion sizes for pasta or starches. I reduce how often I eat ice cream sundaes, but when I do eat them, I enjoy every bite! (McDonald’s has a great little hot-fudge sundae for just \$1 and 54 carbs. By contrast, the peanut-butter cup sundae at Friendly’s, which I also love, is 90 carbs. I plan accordingly! I eat both once in a while and still maintain my weight, so it can be done.).

What if I’m a vegetarian?

I don’t live a vegetarian lifestyle, so I’m not an expert. I’ve included a top-selling vegetarian low-carb cookbook in Appendix B (“Real People Don’t Diet Resources”) that may be helpful to you.

I suspect the “Real People Don’t Diet” formula would work just fine with a vegetarian lifestyle, especially because we don’t believe in limiting any vegetables or fruits, regardless of their carb counts. If you’re used to getting your protein from beans, nuts and other non-meat sources, you should continue to do so while eating the RPDD way. That’ll work just fine.

Now that you have the lay of the “lower-carb” land, let’s get you started on your own “real” eating strategy!

Chapter 4

Getting Ready For Real Food

Since the “Real People Don’t Diet” formula for losing weight is to eat fewer carbs at every meal, the very first step in getting you ready to eat this way for the rest of your life (and finally maintain your natural weight) is to get some idea of the number of carbs per day you’re consuming now.

To figure this out, all you need to do is eat “normally” for one day and track the carbs per meal.

Armed with that knowledge, you will know what “fewer carbs” means to you.

For example, I used to eat between 100-200 grams of carbs a day, approximately. By simply cutting down to around 60-100 grams, I lost weight. My husband dropped it even more, to around 40-80 grams of carbs per day. He lost weight faster, but then again, he needed to lose a lot more weight than I did (don’t tell him I said that!).

You can do this casually, or if you’re a numbers person, just print out the “How Many Carbs?” chart in Appendix C (or below) and track meals, snacks and beverages you eat and drink for one day. For a really accurate figure, track your meals for a week (including eating out) and then take an average.

Remember, this is how you eat **now**. If you’re overweight, then it’s highly likely the amount of carbs you’re consuming is **too high**. Even if you eat or drink just a few less carbs each day, you will lose weight from this point on.

If you aren't sure how to count your carbs, begin by checking labels. Watch serving size. If you eat 16 potato chips with lunch and the package says 16 grams of carbs for a serving of 8 chips, then you actually ate 32 grams of carbs.

For homemade recipes, get a good estimate of carbs per dish by adding up carbs per ingredient.

If product packaging isn't available (like fruits and fresh vegetables, for example), check the website I gave earlier for carb charts and serving sizes: <http://lowcarb.bellaonline.com>.

You can also use the internet to find carb and nutrition information for restaurant offerings, brand-name products, beverages and more.

Don't worry about being exact; all you want is a pretty good picture of your typical daily carb intake at the end of the day!

I bet your total carbs was a lot higher than you thought it would be!

But that's all in the past. Starting today, you are going to eat fewer carbs per meal, fewer carbs per day, and end up weighing a lot fewer pounds a year from now!

Are you thinking this sounds too good to be true? Is it a little voice in your head saying "call it what you want, this is still another diet" or "I'll fail at this, just like I do everything else I try" or "It's too hard for me".

Let me encourage you with this: successfully using this formula for the rest of our life doesn't require self-discipline, nor does it require dieting. All you need to do is trick your brain. Since you're not going hungry and you're not denying yourself the foods you love, you aren't dieting (see the definition of dieting from Chapter 1).

Human beings have an inherent sense of "fairness". We crave balance, which is why life becomes so stressful for many when it's out of balance. So if you can let your brain think you're only giving up that warm dinner roll because you're going to feed yourself cheesecake later on that is MUCH more satisfying, your brain won't release those hormones that scream out for ROLLS! ROLLS! ROLLS NOW!, which requires a load of self-discipline to ignore.

From my own experience, whenever I made trade-offs in my brain (which is each and every time I eat), I immediately begin to anticipate the food item that's coming up, or the benefit I'll derive from eliminating/substituting/reducing a certain food. My brain moves on and I don't have cravings or feel guilty. I'm satisfied by what I'm currently eating and looking forward to the next course!

How do you trick your brain? You need to jump-start it. We'll begin by making one-time lists that analyze your food habits and likes/dislikes. You'll consciously make elimination/substitution/reduction decisions on paper.

This will "imprint" your new choices on your brain. It will change your thought patterns. The next time you eat any of the foods you list, your brain will now default to the choices you made on paper. You won't have to really think about. Your brain will be fully aware of the choice and will cooperate, instead of "fighting" you the whole way.

It sounds crazy, but it really works! Think of the following exercises as re-programming your brain.

And the really good news is that you build new eating habits each and every time you make a choice different than the ones you've been making up until now. Your body will fairly quickly rid itself of carb addictions, and those choices will seem easier and easier, until they're practically effortless.

This is what happened to both my husband and I, and we are polar opposites when it comes to personality. We've both changed our eating habits permanently.

Make a list of foods you can't live without

Use the Action Chart in Appendix C to make a list of foods or dishes you love and can't live without. Don't worry about carbs. Just list them all.

Here's what my list looks like:

I LOVE...	CARB-REDUCING ACTION...
Fritos	
Mashed potatoes	
Stuffing	
Spaghetti and meatballs	
Chinese food	
Subs	
McDonald's	
Pizza	
Peanut butter cup sundaes	
Beef stew	
Casseroles	
French fries	
Coffee	

Not exactly a shock that I needed to lose weight, eh?

Now draw a line down the paper, like the chart above. On the other side of the line write down a low-carb substitute or strategy to allow you to continue enjoying those foods, but with fewer sugars or “bad” carbs involved. Strategies could include substituting ingredients, eliminating ingredients, smaller portions or less frequent consumption.

For example, I still plan on eating casseroles, but in the column next to it I would write something like “double meats and veggies and cut pastas by 50%”, “use more sauce”, and “eat once every 2 weeks instead of once a week”.

Some of your favorite foods may already be low-carb, such as cheese, eggs or meats. Terrific! Eat them as often as you like.

When you're done with your list, you'll realize that you won't have to give up one single thing you love. Instead, you'll change some ingredients, eat smaller portions, make low-carb adjustments or moderate your intake.

Here are my solutions:

I LOVE...	SUBSTITUTE
Fritos	Remove from bag, eat one at a time
Mashed potatoes	Once every two weeks instead of once a week
Stuffing	Mixed in with meat dishes; ¼ cup serving plain
Spaghetti and meatballs	Barilla whole-wheat pasta; 1/3 plate serving with lots of meatballs
Chinese food	Heavy on chicken and broccoli, ½ as much lo mein and rice
Subs	Six inches only, loaded with veggies and lean meat, no mayo. Don't eat heels, just bread over meat.
McDonald's	Iced tea, no fries, grilled chicken sandwiches, less bun, McNuggets
Pizza	Small slices, veggies or meats on top, salad as a side
Peanut butter cup sundaes	Once every 1-2 months, no fries or bread at meal
Beef stew	½ as many potatoes, no flour in broth (use cream of mushroom soup in crock pot instead); no bread

Casseroles	Wheat pasta whenever possible, cut pasta 50%, smaller portions, extra veggies or meats and salad
French fries	Kettle chips instead, or steal a couple off someone else
Coffee	Continue drinking black, flavored

Make a list of foods you like but CAN live without

Using another copy of the Action Chart in Appendix C, write down the foods you like but would be willing to live without because you'd rather (a) eat food you can't live without (in the exercise above) and (b) would choose "being thinner" if you were forced to decide between food you sort of like and losing weight!

When you're done making this list, simply cross off the high-carb items, or come up with substitutes. These are foods you can enjoy once in a while, if the opportunity presents itself, but will now make an effort to cut out of your shopping list and regular diet. Any low-carb or medium-carb items can stick around.

Here's my example:

I LIKE BUT CAN LIVE WITHOUT...	ELIMINATE/SUBSTITUTE/REDUCE
Egg salad	Eliminate
Quiche	Reduce
Lasagna	Reduce
Pork	Eliminate
Tuna salad	Eliminate
Chicken salad	Eliminate
Rice (of any kind)	Reduce

Rolls	Eliminate
Ice cream	Reduce or try sugar-free
Cakes	Reduce or eat half-portions
Cookies	Reduce, don't use shortening
Pretzels	Eliminate in favor of Fritos!

Make a list of healthy foods you don't like

On yet another copy of the Action Chart in Appendix C, list healthy foods (usually veggies) that you really don't like all that much.

Purge yourself by listing all those foods you know you should eat, but can't. Just write them down! I dislike shellfish, asparagus, turnips and cooked spinach. They will never cross my lips.

What are the health benefits of each food? List a substitute you **like** to eat that offers the same benefits in the next column. Now you have a list of foods you don't mind eating that will provide the same health benefits as the foods you should eat, but really don't want to eat.

If you learn that you should be eating more spinach, but find it as gross as I do, you can just flash back to this list and say "Ah! Fiber and green veggies! I'll just have some more green beans."

I strongly dislike most fish, and Chris has forbidden the preparation of it, therefore, I need to find a substitute food high in omega-3 and fatty oils. Nuts and beans fit the bill. I may throw in an Omega-3 or fish oil supplement as well.

Make a list of your family's favorite foods and recipes

Personalize your new strategy even further by using an Action Chart to list all your family's favorite foods and recipes.

Use the chart to list eliminations/substitutions/reductions that will drop the carb count but still allow you to serve those foods that keep everyone's tummies happy!

Do you have kids that go crazy over chicken nuggets and pasta with butter? A husband that loves casseroles and potatoes smothered with gravy?

Choose mac-and-cheese mixes that are organic or whole-wheat, if at all possible. We went from regular macaroni and cheese to organic. It has about the same amount of carbs, but is much healthier, and just as tasty. I serve it with raw baby carrots, which are always in the fridge. No prep required, nice and crunchy with a touch of sweetness, and perfect for dipping in ranch dressing, if desired.

Gravy and mashed potatoes? Fine...just serve up half the portion you used to. Like I mentioned before, mash those taters with cream cheese or sour cream and skim milk, not cream and butter. Gravy isn't all that high in carbs, or at least certain jar brands aren't. Check labels for the most carb-friendly brand. Try eating less gravy than you normally would. You'll still lose weight!

Here are some examples of dinner strategies:

DINNER...	STRATEGY...
Nuggets and fries	Nuggets (surprisingly low in carbs) with oven-baked thin fast-food fries; baby carrots on the side
Turkey dinner with all the trimmings	Lots of turkey, ½ as many potatoes as usual, ½ as much stuffing as usual, gravy, lots of veggies, water and salad, if available
Baked ziti	1/3 plate of ziti, 2/3 plate of salad and/or veggies
Grilled cheese and tomato soup	Rye bread for sandwich, broth-based soup
Picnics	½ cup pasta salad with veggies or wheat pasta, rye sandwiches, kettle chips, water or seltzer
Barbecues	Tasty meat with low-sugar marinades, grilled or packet veggies, red potatoes with onions and butter, beans with no-sugar or light-sugar sauce, easy on the BBQ sauce

Again, what's the point in making these lists?

Even though you may never refer to your list again, your subconscious will remember. When you begin shopping and preparing food using your new low-carb strategy the lists you made will come to mind, and you'll automatically begin making the substitutions and implementing the strategies you designed just now.

By making these lists, you're rehearsing success and eliminating reasons and excuses to fail!

The last step in "getting ready for real food"? Take your "Before" picture. It won't last long!

Chapter 5

Don't Set Goals

Before you begin to eat like a Real Person, **don't** set a measurable weight-loss goal.

Yep, you heard me correctly. Don't set a goal. At least not a measurable goal.

Your goal is simply this: to lose extra pounds until you reach your natural weight, and then to maintain that weight for the rest of your life.

Do you even know how many pounds you need to lose? Maybe it's 27 instead of 35, and you just don't know it. Do you know what your natural weight is? Do you crave to be a size 6 when you're really a natural size 8?

Putting a number in your head is setting yourself up for failure.

I know, I know. Conventional wisdom tells us that if we don't set measurable goals, we won't achieve them. In fact, we're supposed to write them down and put them where we can see them every day.

I'm sure in most cases that's motivating: "I want to save \$10,000." "I want to buy a car for cash." "I want to be promoted within 2 years."

But when you want to lose weight, why would you even **need** a reminder that you need to lose 50 pounds, much less have one staring you in the face every day?

Not only that, but you can't be sure your goal is accurate to begin with. Thanks to human nature it's a pretty good bet any weight-loss goal you set will be unrealistic or unachievable. If you have a lot of weight to lose, then any goal amount will also seem insurmountable. What do you end up doing? You focus all your thoughts and energy on the number of pounds you have to lose.

Spend that thought and energy on more short-term thinking, such as how you're going to cut a few carbs from your next meal!

What you'll find is that you'll suddenly realize a week after you start that you have more energy and feel a little bit better. By Week 2 you might feel as though you don't crave carbs like you used to. By Week 3 your jeans are definitely fitting better. And so on.

It's a heck of a lot easier to think about cutting carbs out of today's breakfast than it is to think "Great, I've lost 10 pounds, I have 40 more to go."

It'll be easier to start with, and easier as the days go by. A few months down the road you'll suddenly find you're an entire size smaller! It may not even take months.

This, to me, sounds like a much more motivating way to lose weight!

Another logical reason to avoid setting a numeric weight-loss goal is because that's exactly what everyone does before they begin dieting. Since this entire book is based on the fact that dieting doesn't work, I would suggest you don't do one single thing that even **resembles** a diet!

So don't get yourself on the goal/failure/guilt merry-go-round. Decide to embrace the Real People Don't Diet way of eating and finally enjoy food for the rest of your life.

Need further proof?

Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't this how we typically try to lose weight:

- ✓ Set goal
- ✓ Begin working on goal
- ✓ Every day, check to see whether you've reached your goal
- ✓ After a few days, begin to think you'll never reach your goal
- ✓ After a month, get depressed that you aren't closer to your goal
- ✓ Quit trying because you know you'll never reach your goal

We quit because we set ourselves up for failure. Again, see if this sounds familiar:

- ✓ "I want to be a size 4" (even though no one in your family has ever been less than a size 8)
- ✓ "I need to lose 10 pounds in two weeks"
- ✓ "I'll just stop eating sugar"
- ✓ "No more pasta or bread for me!"
- ✓ "I'll walk my entire lunch hour, every day!"

None of those resolutions will **ever** work! Why? Because they're totally unrealistic. So, you carry on until you break one of the resolutions, assume your diet/new eating plan is unrealistic, and quit, thinking "I can't do this". Your weight problem continues until you find the next fad diet, and so the cycle begins once again.

Why set yourself up for failure?

Like I said before, **you already have a goal. It's to lose weight.** How much? **You'll find out.** How long will it take? **As long as it takes.** What size will I be? **Your natural size.**

If you use lifelong eating habits versus dieting and binging cycles, your body will lose weight until you reach your natural size. Then, you'll simply maintain your ideal weight. There won't be a question of putting the weight back on.

So, in case anyone asks, your goal is just this: to lose weight and inches.

How will you do it? By eating fewer carbs every time you open your mouth.

It's that simple. It's that easy.

Chapter 6

Eat Real Food

I don't have anything against low-carb energy bars or packaged dinners. I eat them myself, occasionally.

Sometimes you hear the argument that those foods compensate for fewer calories, carbs and/or fats with higher sodium or chemical content. That may be the case.

My objection to those types of foods is simply this: the more you depend on anything other than “real food” to control your eating, the harder it will be for you to succeed.

I keep bringing up the “do you want to do this forever?” point, but it always holds true. Do you want to purchase and eat those types of foods forever? You may eat them to lose weight temporarily, but unless you've developed a strategy for eating real food, you'll gain the weight right back.

Use these types of items to help you out when you're in a bind—to avoid fast food or curb hunger when you're out shopping. But don't rely on them to help you lose weight.

Instead, use the lists you made in Chapter 5 to help you lose weight by changing how you eat and prepare the “real food” you already eat. You'll train yourself to make good food choices for life.

Plus, if you lose weight eating real food, you'll create lifestyle habits that will become so engrained, you lose and maintain weight no matter what or where you eat.

And have you checked to see how much those "diet" products cost lately? Let's just say you'll save lots of money. So treat yourself to a nice dinner out instead.

Take a moment to reflect on how good it will feel to know that you will never have to spend another dollar on diet books, diet food, diet drinks or diet snacks **ever again**.

You'll never again say "I can't—I'm on a diet". Instead, you'll say "No thanks, I'd rather have _____".

Remember, Real People Don't Diet—they eat!

Chapter 7

Don't Count Calories or Fat—It'll Slow You Down

Except under special circumstances or when medically directed to do so, Real People don't worry about weighing food or counting calories.

Why don't we count calories or fats? Because counting calories is less convenient than counting carbs. I can look at an appetizer menu and instantly know which foods are low in carbs. But calories and fat? Dip looks the same to me whether it's made with regular ranch dressing or non-fat ranch dressing. I'd have to inquire as to exact ingredients or skip the dip altogether in order to make sure I met my caloric limit for the day. Same with fats.

Remember, you want to develop eating habits that last your entire lifetime. If you find it's easy to count calories, go ahead. Personally, I think it's easier to just know about which foods are higher in carbs than others, and make decisions that way.

Whether you use our strategy, a modified version, your own strategy, or a diet—just make sure it's something you can take wherever you go, and something you can really do for a lifetime.

If you cannot maintain your weight-loss method for life, you will **always** gain your weight back. If you depend on a company, system, group, special food or simple denial, you will **not** keep the weight off on your own (there are rare exceptions).

Just something to think about. ☺

Chapter 8

Don't Deny Yourself Foods You Love

Are you a Real Person? Then these statements probably apply to you:

- ✓ **Real People want to be content. Real People want to enjoy their food—after all, they worked hard to provide and prepare it.**
- ✓ **Real People will eat foods they don't like once in a while in order to be healthy—but not all the time.**
- ✓ **Real People don't like all healthy foods.**
- ✓ **Real People always like some healthy foods.**

Assuming the above statements are true, can you please explain to me why most fad diets prevent Real People from being content with what they eat? Why do most diets involve complete and total denial of foods Real People enjoy?

You need to get up from your dinner table happy with your meal.

Why? Because if you don't, you'll go back to your old eating habits.

And you know where those old eating habits have gotten you.

Now don't misunderstand me. You can't just eat everything you want, as much as you want, when you want it. Having some sort of control over your eating habits is essential to maintaining a healthy weight. Please don't think the Real

People Don't Diet formula gives you a license to just go crazy. I would hope by now you've come to understand it doesn't.

What the Real People Don't Diet formula **does** do is allow you to eat some of all the foods you want, within reason. It gives you a system for eating the same foods you buy now and the same foods you enjoy now, but in different formulations or amounts or frequencies. You will use the formula to create more moderation in your eating habits—not deprivation.

Essentially, it's this moderation—a reduction in overall carbs you consume—that will cause you to lose your extra weight. And it's this moderation that will allow you to maintain that weight. The moderation will become a habit, and then you'll never have to diet again.

A few people have argued that Real People Don't Diet is still a diet because it requires denial. Well, in a literal sense, I guess that's true. (The denial part, I mean. If I'm eating hot-fudge sundaes fairly regularly there's no way you can convince me that I'm on a diet!)

Our formula does ask you to be willing to deny yourself **something** at every meal, be it a certain food item or a larger share of it. But you offset that with something you like, or more of something you like, or a different ingredient you like just as much. So it's really a zero-sum transaction when it comes to your emotions.

But the result of the transaction is a net loss when it comes to what you're taking into your body—a net loss of carbs. And that translates to lost pounds!

This is just a "Cate-ism", but I believe our brain has little "that's not fair" meters. If we feel we can **never** eat bread, our brain screams, "That's not fair!" and the

body is unsatisfied. At some point we just get bad and go ahead and eat all the bread we want, which is usually a lot more than we need.

But if we tell our brain that we get to have a slice of cheesecake because we skipped the bread (and a lot of the pasta), then our brain says, “Oh, ok, cheesecake instead of bread, that’s fair.” And we’re mysteriously satisfied. What our brain ignored was the fact that the pasta serving was only 10 grams of carbs versus 31 grams for the bread. Net loss = 21 grams of carbs! Plus we got to eat cheesecake.

Hard-core low-carb dieters will say “But how many carbs are in the cheesecake? Shouldn’t you skip that too?” Why should you have to? Didn’t you used to eat the bread AND most of the pasta AND the cheesecake anyway? In the above scenario, this Real Person went home 21 grams of carbs lighter but had essentially the same meal and felt just as satisfied. In fact, I bet he or she felt better than they usually do after eating that exact same meal—not overstuffed and carb-sleepy.

The point of all this is to warn you: as you go through the process of using the Real People Don’t Diet formula to change your eating habits, be very careful to **never** feel as though you’re denying yourself. Your brain will become dissatisfied with what you’re doing and you’ll be tempted to give up. Chances are very high you eventually **will** give up.

If you begin to feel as though you’re denying yourself, stop and read this book again. Just figure out a way to have whatever it is you want to have but still end up with fewer carbs.

I hate to keep repeating myself, but if you’re eating the Real People Don’t Diet way, you’re **not on a diet!**

Chapter 9

Expect Obstacles and Overcome Them

I hope by now you feel as though I've been as "real" as I can with you—helping you identify and overcome common obstacles when it comes to losing weight with our strategy.

Still, we wanted to devote an entire chapter to reminding you that nothing is foolproof or perfect. You will encounter obstacles (likely daily) that will try to prevent you from taking control of your eating and achieving the weight you know is right for you.

The vast majority of those obstacles will be mental, and I'm hoping that when you just naturally apply the Real People Don't Diet formula you'll overcome those obstacles fairly easily, as we have.

One of the ways to overcome obstacles is to identify them. Take some time to actually think through what's prevented you from losing weight up until now. Use the who-what-when-where-why-how method. Who do you usually overeat with? Who triggers your overeating? What do you eat too much of? When do you overeat? Where do you overeat? WHY do you overeat? How do you overeat—are you using huge plates of serving spoons or enjoying buffet lines?

You don't have to do anything about these right now. Just be aware of them!

Now take a look at what you do **right** when it comes to eating. Do you avoid alcoholic beverages entirely? Are you not a "snack" person? Maybe you're not tempted by sweets—just pasta?

Whatever it is that you currently do right when it comes to our low-carb strategy, brag to yourself about it. Strategize to play to that strength as much as possible.

For example, if you aren't a dessert person, then position yourself near the dessert table when socializing at a banquet or party. The smell of chocolate won't sway you.

If you aren't a snack person, then don't feel guilty if you take an extra slice of the super-sub at the Super Bowl party. The person eating half as much sub as you probably loaded up on appetizers!

Just as you should play up your strengths, be acutely aware of your weaknesses.

Just as the lists you made in Chapter 5 will have helped you rehearse and create mental strategies, so will a list of weaknesses. Try to trick your brain to overcome weaknesses. Don't rely on your willpower to do it. Plan ahead. Practice ahead of time how you'll handle your weaknesses differently.

Still, no matter how self-aware you become, you'll still face temptations and obstacles you never counted on.

It's a well-known fact that a lot of us use food to comfort or calm us when experiencing highly stressful situations. Have a strategy in place should one of those situations present itself.

Keep low-carb foods you enjoy—look forward to eating--in your desk at work or within easy reach at home for those high-stress days. Even better, allow yourself a high-carb treat or two to satisfy unexpected cravings. But cut the portion in half. (Have half a donut, half a bagel, half a cupcake, half a piece of pie, half a bowl of ice cream...you get the picture.)

Stressful situations sometimes lend themselves to the destructive habit of bingeing. You're too distraught or busy to eat, so you avoid food for hours...then when you get hungry, you eat everything in sight. Overcome this obstacle by getting in the habit of eating as soon as you feel hunger pangs. Munch until the edge is off. Then continue on with your activity.

I find simple snacks such as cheese sticks, apples, or even small dishes of leftovers work great for those in-between or just-about mealtimes, when my stomach is growling and I'm craving high-carb satisfaction. (Of course, Fritos take the edge off for me, as well!)

Drinks can sometimes satisfy hunger. Seltzer or water works wonders.

You'll find that as you begin to anticipate and overcome temptations and obstacles, it'll get easier and easier each time you do it. Your Real Strategy for eating will become a habit, and soon you'll automatically adjust your eating—correctly-- even as you focus on your high-stress situation, without having to give it a second thought.

I'd like to add one final word of warning.

I've heard from many readers over the last two years, most of whom are writing in to ask questions or tell me how much weight they've lost. But every once in a while I get someone who writes to say "it didn't work for me". There are two main reasons why those folks fail to lose weight using the RPDD method:

- 1) They can't get out of "diet" mode and treat RPDD as though it were a strict regimen to follow, getting frustrated because RPDD doesn't have a daily outline for them to follow; or

2) They blame others in their household who don't want to use the RPDD formula and continue to overeat or make poor food choices.

If you cannot overcome these two obstacles, you will not succeed. There's nothing I can do to change that.

Decide that eating lower-carb isn't a diet. It's a lifetime habit. And then get on with it.

If you tend to blame others because you can't seem to lose weight, you need to understand that Real People Don't Diet is a terrific way to accomplish your own goals **without** being dependent on anyone else's choices. It will free you in the sense that you don't have to force your husband or kids to forego their favorite food and drink in order to sustain your diet.

Real People Don't Diet puts you in the position where you can make trade-off choices that affect only you! If your family wants meals made the same as you made them before, then you either substitute ingredients that keep everyone happy with the same old taste and texture, or you lower carbs some other way, such as reducing your portions in favor of lower-carb items and/or eating lower-carb options as side dishes independent of what your family eats.

Real People Don't Diet allows you to begin to lose weight without having to make announcements, go to meetings or buy unusual and expensive foods. You can begin the process without telling anyone at all. You don't need to enlist your family's support to succeed. That's the beauty of it!

As I recommended back in Chapter 2, you're probably better off not telling anyone what you're doing anyway, at least not until they can start to notice a difference.

Chapter 10

Healthy Choices Always Work

In addition to lowering carbs at every meal, Chris and I also decided we would continue to try and make as healthier food choices for our family as well. This isn't a requirement for losing weight—reducing your carbs will result in weight loss—but we believed it just made sense.

Right off the bat, we said we would never limit our intake of fruits and vegetables, regardless of carb count. Yes, we would watch portion sizes when it came to starchy vegetables like potatoes, and we would also be aware of preparation (sauces add carbs and calories, and juices are just empty sugars). But we would never turn down a fruit or veggie again! It really made our strategy that much easier to carry out.

We examined the foods we ate most—or our kids ate most—and decided to pay for the more expensive, organic versions of these. To compensate, we eliminated some of the less healthy foods from our pantry.

For example, we currently use an organic mac-and-cheese box mix. To make up for the increase in price, we stopped buying cookies.

We decided to try a whole-wheat pasta, instead of using white enriched flour pasta. After trying a few brands, we found Barilla whole-wheat pasta not only looked just like real pasta, but tasted great, too!

We feel this strategy has contributed to major improvements in our family's overall health. A skin condition in our son wasn't resolved after eighteen months

of traditional treatment and steroid creams. Just 30 days of a high-fiber, gluten-free, low-sugar diet and one or two immune-building supplements eliminated his skin condition almost immediately! It was amazing.

You really **are** what you eat!

The less processed the foods you take into your body are, the better off you'll be.

Some other benefits of eating healthier:

- ✓ **Thicker, shinier hair**
- ✓ **Sleep better at night**
- ✓ **More energy**
- ✓ **Regular elimination**
- ✓ **Faster metabolism**
- ✓ **Smoother skin**

Approach healthy eating with the same strategy you'll use for weight loss: just eat a little healthier at every meal. Build up at your own pace.

Remember it's not "all or nothing". An ice-cream sundae once in a while won't hurt you!

Chapter 11

Lose Weight Even Faster

Having read this far, you're probably surprised at how little we've mentioned fatty foods or the need to exercise. Most "diet" books talk a lot about both!

Let me be clear: research has consistently and resoundingly proven that low-fat, low-sodium diets as well as regular exercise is essential for good health and disease prevention.

If you want to accelerate your weight loss, we highly recommend that you either continue exercising or start an exercise program, if at all possible (after consulting with your physician, of course). Use the Real People Don't Diet philosophy and start small. Do something you enjoy and make small changes in order to fit it into your schedule.

In addition to exercise, another way to rapidly accelerate your weight loss is to cut down on the amount of fats you consume (but be wary of high-sugar fat substitutes). Switch to low-fat or non-fat dairy products, for starters. Eat more lean meats versus fatty meats.

You don't **have** to do this to lose weight—reducing carbs will work—but reducing the fats you eat will speed things up!

Yet one more strategy to lose weight faster is to drink lots (and lots) of water. It's amazing—it really does work! I used to prefer seltzer over water, because I crave carbonated beverages from a can. But in the last six months or so I've gone to just plain ice water.

(If you do exercise regularly, be careful of sport drinks. They're high in sugar and carbs. I know high-powered athletes need certain sugars to keep their performance at a peak, but you're probably much better off drinking water than loads of Gatorade (which is full of sugars).)

Recent studies have shown that proper amounts of sleep have a big effect on weight loss. If you don't get enough sleep, your body secretes hormones that actually build fatty stores. If you aren't getting 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night, please do whatever it takes to make that happen. You'll feel better. You'll look better. And you won't be sabotaging your weight-loss efforts.

Personally, I never used to get 7 to 8 hours of sleep. It was more like 5 to 6 per night. Within the last few months I started setting my alarm and getting up 5 a.m. to work, do e-mail, read, have devotions...whatever I wanted to do when the house was quiet and no one was around. I had to go to bed earlier, around 9 p.m., but I became addicted to my new morning private time and did a pretty good job of guarding my sleep.

I found almost right away that I felt better all day long. I got more done and was more productive. I was a nicer person to be around. My skin looked better. My senses seemed heightened. It was amazing! Give it a try.

If you need to squeeze into that bathing suit six weeks from now, or have a class reunion coming up next month, then combine regular exercise, low-fat foods and extra water with your lower-carb diet, and you'll find your weight loss will super-accelerate!

Chapter 12

This Is Not a Diet. I Repeat, This Is Not A Diet!

I hope by now it's clear that this book **isn't** about dieting!

Yes, we mention low-carb. We mention our “lower-carb diet”. And we mention the need to eat smaller portions (of carb-laden foods). But if you've read carefully, you realize we are **not** eating and drinking sparingly, which is the definition of dieting.

Hopefully, you realize we're talking about a pretty easy, doable way to mathematically lose weight and keep it off—for life!

If you want to lose weight and stay slim—for the rest of your lifetime—then you will need to eat like a Real Person.

When people start noticing your weight loss, don't tell them you're on a diet. Don't even use the word with yourself. Trick your brain. Instead of dieting, what you're actually doing is simple math. You're eating fewer carbs so your body is converting less of your food into stored fat for energy. Your body is becoming more efficient.

So if someone asks, tell them you're just doing math! You're in reduction mode.



I am convinced that dieting is the worst thing you can do if you want to be slim and healthy for a lifetime. It's unhealthy for your body to yo-yo back and forth between being overweight, dieting to lose weight, then gaining weight again. And that doesn't even take into account the emotional damage that dieting

causes, when you hope for something, fail, blame yourself, and then start all over again in the exact same cycle.

No one should ever buy into extreme diets. They may create short-term results, but won't ever create long-term results. Why? Because it's very difficult for us to maintain extreme levels of anything for very long. We were created to maintain balance—in our bodies, minds and spirits.

I heard someone say once that human nature tends to go from one ditch to another—very few people live their lives going right down the middle of the road.

So don't take our Real People strategy and make it extreme. Don't beat yourself up if you have that extra piece of pizza. Make up for it at your next meal by having lower carbs than usual. As long as you end each day eating fewer carbs than you used to, you're ahead of the game!

Stay out of the ditches and make consistent lower-carb choices. You'll lose weight safely, gradually and even better, you'll prove to yourself you don't have to diet to make it happen.

Believe in this plan and use it. Eat like a “real person”.

Chapter 13

Accept Compliments Gracefully

Sound like a weird chapter title?

Actually, I think it's one of the most important chapters in this book!

As we began to lose weight, our friends and family started taking notice. Comments ranged from, "Have you lost weight?" to "Holy cow, I barely recognized you!"

One day I realized that my typical response to those comments was along the lines of:

- ✓ "I still have a ways to go until I get where I want to be..."
- ✓ "Yeah, thanks, but I still have jeans that don't fit!"
- ✓ "I'll probably gain it all back over the holidays!"

What prompted me to examine my reaction to those compliments was a commercial for Jenny Craig (ironically) on television. I saw their celebrity spokeswoman flaunting her weight loss. She obviously had more weight to lose, but she was having a ball celebrating the pounds that had already come off!

I decided to graciously accept every compliment that came my way, from that point on. And now I just say, "Thank you" or "I feel great".

Don't forget, too, that others will try to criticize the strategy you're using. They're just jealous!

You can share the Real People Don't Diet strategy with them if you like (heck, help us out and recommend the book by sending them to www.RealPeopleDontDiet.com).

But as long as you're losing weight and looking great, take the compliments as they come. Just think...you'll be getting them for a lifetime!

Conclusion

Now you know our secret to losing weight without dieting.

Chris and I are just like everyone else. We don't have skinny genes, we don't have a personal chef, and we don't go to the gym. (even though we should)

We have a busy schedule just like you, with four jobs, three kids that we homeschool five days a week, a home to maintain, church responsibilities, Little League, dance, large families with lots of activities, hobbies and more.

If we did it, so can **YOU!**

Remember, start by approaching your very next meal as a simple math formula.

How would you normally eat the meal? Now, take away some carbs. Use your lists for substitutions. Take away a lot, take away a little. Either way, if you eat the same meal with fewer carbs, you **will** lose some weight.

Not feeling deprived? Not frustrated? Good. Move on to the next meal.

Easy, isn't it?

We hope you'll stick with this strategy, lose weight, get healthier and feel much, much better about yourself!

If you have a success story, visit our website at www.RealPeopleDontDiet.com and let us know. Or send an email to office AT realpeopledontdiet.com.

Feel free to write and ask questions any time. We wish you much health and happiness and weight-loss success!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cate Brizzell and her husband Chris developed the “Real People Don’t Diet” weight-loss strategy in June of 2006. By the time her e-book of the same name was published in January of 2007 the couple had lost nearly 60 pounds combined.

A freelance author and stay-at-home mom, Cate manages website design and content for local corporate clients. She founded and maintains several websites of her own, including

www.home-budget-help.com and www.moms-make-money-online.com, as well as www.RealPeopleDontDiet.com.



Cate lives with her husband and three children in upstate New York where she enjoys homeschooling, Jane Austen novels, scrapbooking, golf and traveling.

APPENDIX A

Our “Real Family” Menu

Take a peek at this list of foods our family might eat during any typical day. Remember, we're eating and drinking fewer carbs at each meal! Many of these meals can be found in the “Real People Don't Diet Recipes” bonus booklet.

Breakfast

Frosted Maple Mini-Wheats with skim milk
Whole-wheat English muffin with real butter or all-fruit
Bisquick Reduced Fat Pancakes made with skim milk and real maple syrup
Scrambled or fried eggs with no-nitrite breakfast sausages
Mini-whole-wheat bagel with cream cheese

Snacks

Sharp cheddar cheese
Triscuits Garden Herb crackers
Banana
Apple
Baby carrots or celery sticks with peanut butter
Tostitos with natural salsa
Fritos
Pretzels (with no corn syrup)
Homemade popcorn, not microwave

Lunch

Hormel all-natural deli meats (no nitrites, and delicious)
Provolone or American cheese
Wheat or rye bread
Organic soup, no sugar added
Organic macaroni and cheese (for the kids)
Tyson chicken nuggets
Leftovers from last night's meal
Salad
Burger
A few fries
Kettle chips
Organic all-beef hot dogs
Chili
My homemade chicken noodle soup (see Recipes bonus)

Dinner

Chicken stir-fry with brown rice or whole-wheat spaghetti

Spaghetti (Barilla whole wheat) with a ton of meatballs in homemade marinara sauce

Beef Stew

Roast chicken with mashed potatoes and veggies

Steak with mashed potatoes (made with skim milk and/or cream cheese and sour cream)

Frito Chicken

Pot roast with mashed potatoes and veggies

Roast beef with mashed potatoes and veggies

Homemade pizza on Fridays (with family movie night), using fresh dough from store

Burgers

Zesty Macaroni and Cheese

Italian Goulash

...and more!

Do our typical menus sound like a diet to you? ☺ I didn't think so!

APPENDIX B

“Real People Don’t Diet” Resources

WEBSITES

Bag a McMeal

Find out how many carbs your favorite meal at McD’s will cost!

<http://nutrition.mcdonalds.com/bagamcmeal/bagMeal.do>

Low-Carb at BellaOnline.com

Lisa Shea offers great articles, reviews and online carb charts.

<http://lowcarb.bellaonline.com>

BOOKS

George Stella’s “Stella Style” Books and DVD’s

“Eating Stella-Style: Low-Carb Recipes for Healthy Living”

[Buy at Amazon](#)

“George Stella’s Livin’ Low Carb: Family Recipes Stella Style”

[Buy at Amazon](#)

“George Stella’s Livin’ Large and Losing Weight: Stella Style DVD Vol. 1”

[Buy at Amazon](#)

“George Stella’s Stickin’ With It Stella Style: Stella Style DVD Vol. 2”

[Buy at Amazon](#)

200 Low-Carb Slow Cooker Recipes: Healthy Dinners Ready When You Are!

By Dana Carpender

[Buy at Amazon](#)

Eat This, Not That! Thousands of Simple Food Swaps That Can Save You 10, 20, 30 Pounds—or More!

By David Zinczenko and Matt Goulding

[Buy at Amazon](#)

The 150 Healthiest Foods on Earth: The Surprising, Unbiased Truth About What You Should Eat and Why

By Jonny Bowden

[Buy at Amazon](#)

Healthy Carb Cookbook for Dummies

By Jan McCracken

[Buy at Amazon](#)

Carb Conscious Vegetarian: 150 Delicious Recipes for a Healthy Lifestyle

By Robin Robertson

[Buy at Amazon](#)

Living The Low-Carb Life Pocket Carb Counter: The Complete Reference For Your Controlled-Carbohydrate Lifestyle

By Jonny Bowden

[Buy at Amazon](#)

Leo Quinn's "How To Own Your Paycheck Again"

(Just because Leo was the inspiration for our formula.)

Get out of debt for good!

<http://www.realpeoledontdiet.com/OwnYourPaycheck>

