



# my dieting patterns: reframing failures

Failure isn't fun, but it's proof that you're trying. Rather than seeing your failures as a zero-sum game, as something that should be punished or hidden away, it can be valuable to look at your past failures as an opportunity for learning and growth.

By taking the time to untangle each failure from the emotions associated with it, we can help to lessen the pain and power that past failures exert over us and be more willing to chase after future successes.

## PART ONE: Finding common threads, insights and lessons

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Consider the diets you've tried in the past, especially those that you feel you "failed at". Do they have any common threads? For example, did they require a lot of meal prep or exercise?

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Why do you feel that these previous diets or eating plans failed? For example, were they too difficult for you to sustain? Or did they not allow enough flexibility?

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At what point in each diet or lifestyle change did you decide it wasn't going to work? Was it 2 weeks in, one month in, or perhaps after a particularly stressful week?

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What can you learn from each of these experiences that will help you be more successful when approaching a new eating plan or lifestyle change in the future?

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Are there any other lessons you can take from these experiences? For example: Do you tend to struggle with implementing new eating plans or habits on days that you're working? Or do you find yourself struggling to stick to a diet when you have more time on your hands, at home?

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## PART TWO: Training yourself to see the positive side

Remind yourself that each failure is simply another step on the road to success. Congratulate yourself for trying, and for failing. Congratulate yourself for making mistakes. You can learn far more from times you didn't succeed than you can from times that you did. In fact, many of the world's most successful people are known to even enjoy making mistakes and relish finding ways to learn from them.

If "failure" feels like too loaded a term for you, then perhaps consider using "feedback" or "information for future reference" or even "I tried and it didn't work because..." Journaling and free-writing can help with this part of the activity. Remember, wherever possible to wrap up each section with an upside or something that you learned. A key phrase that you may find helpful in finding an upside is: "This is good because..."

1

Commence a section in your journal or notebook as follows:

"I tried \_\_\_\_\_ eating plan and it didn't work. I noticed that I struggle with \_\_\_\_\_.  
I find \_\_\_\_\_ particularly difficult when \_\_\_\_\_ "

2

Try to untangle and name each emotion associated with these mistakes or failures as clearly as possible. For example, "When I don't succeed at a new eating plan or lifestyle change, it makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. When I feel like this, I tend to \_\_\_\_\_ (this could be an action, a reaction, a way that you interact with others or another feeling.)

3

Look for the lesson or the information you can take from these experiences. They may not be immediately obvious to you, often our negative perspective on failure can be warped by years (or even decades) of cultural and family conditioning, so don't feel down if you can't see the lesson straight away. Some helpful phrases that may spark new perspectives are: "This is good because...." or "If I hadn't tried this, I never would have...." or "Maybe next time, I will...."

### NOTES

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