

Step 4: Be patient.

Give yourself at least 6 weeks to make your new healthy habits part of your routine. By then, you should feel—and see—the benefits of eating smarter!

The comments had rushed in immediately, led by Miss Vicky.

“EAT SMART? Versus what? Eat stupid? No, I always eat stupid, ‘Freddy’. Eating stupid is what got me to this point where I spend hours talking to a fucking fork.”

“Apple slices on a diet. How original!” Go Go wrote.

“Who writes this crap?” Elaine asked.

“I bet it’s some narcissistic, slim woman who freaks out if she gains five pounds,” Miss Vicky posited.

“Yes, like my *slim* friend,” Teeny Tiny chimed in. “The one that knows what’s *best* for you.”

“Oh, the *slim* friend. I have one of those too! The one who believes that if a diet worked for her it should work for you too,” Go Go wrote.

“The one who only eats kale salads and tells you how much she LOVES them.”

“The one who’s always telling you that you have such a pretty face. The one who says they’re only bugging you about your weight because they want you to be *healthy*.”

“You have a friend like that?” Go Go asked.

“I have three. Aren’t I lucky? Actually, four if I count my sister Little Miss Queen Perfect who lent me the money for my surgery,” Elaine replied.

“Aren’t you lucky? I bet she goes around telling everyone how much weight you’ve lost and praising her own part in your success,” Go Go wrote.

“And I bet she secretly thinks it’s the easy way out,” Miss Vicky wrote. “As if eating just three cups of food a day is so easy.”

“I almost feel like gaining the weight back so my sister can stop congratulating herself on how much weight I’ve lost thanks to her incredible generosity.”

“For me, it’s not so much about looks,” Go Go wrote. “I want to lose seventy-five pounds because I want to be able climb a flight of stairs without getting out of breath. But what annoys me are the backhanded compliments I get, like: ‘You look so much better now.’”

“Hey, you want to know how to lose 120 pounds? Dump your slim friend.”

“LOL.”

“You know what makes me really unhappy? Being patronized and dictated to by someone who has no idea

who I am. I want to tell this person that any unhappiness I have is not a result of being overweight. Being fat may be a symptom of my feelings. But it is the symptom and not the cause.”

“I’m two hundred pounds which for me is a healthy weight,” Teeny Tiny wrote. “DON’T tell me what’s a healthy weight, I want to say to my precious slim friends.”

“I hear you, sister. The slim friend will never understand that you can be fat and happy.”

“I get so tired of reading the preachy, condescending crap on these posts,” Miss Vicky wrote. “Why don’t they hire someone who *gets* it?”

Diane Bracuk is a Toronto writer whose short stories and essays on body dysmorphia, family dysfunction and aging have been widely published in Canada and abroad. Middle-Aged Boys & Girls, her short story collection published by Guernica Editions in 2016, was nominated for a 2017 Evergreen Award by the Ontario Library Association and short-listed for a ReLit Award. Her essay “Doughnut Eaters” about a young girl trying to live up to her father’s impossible standards of perfection, won the 2015 PRISM international prize for non-fiction and was listed as a notable essay in 2015 Best American Essays. Her flash fiction story “Pert Posterior” was published in Guernica Edition’s 2022 flash fiction anthology This Will Only Take a Minute.

PENN KEMP

Gift for Granted

Big I swagger is more fun,
finding comfort in my own
skin. I celebrate belly
button, birthing, navel of
the world, all the more to
round this mound round.

The glitch is a gift, part of
a total packet offered—to
accept the flair of fat, of fun,
an immense and funny presence.