

How a Health Educator Developed a Healthy Relationship with Food

February 25th begins [National Eating Disorders Awareness Week](#), a project started by the National Eating Disorders Association to encourage conversations around eating disorders. This year's theme, *Come As You Are*, emphasizes the goal of uniting those in all stages of body acceptance and spreading the message that all stories deserve to be heard. Jocelyn Resnick, health educator in Health Initiatives is sharing her story of her journey to recovery.

Many people are familiar with the experience of growing up in an image-obsessed society, in which they are constantly told to be unhappy with their bodies and their eating habits.

“Disordered eating began in my adolescence. It felt as if everybody in my immediate surroundings was watching their weight or on a diet. What started as an attempt at becoming healthier turned into a toxic mindset” said Resnick. Jocelyn developed a highly dysfunctional, guilt-ridden relationship with food.

As a side note for our readers, weight is predominantly determined by genetics. It is important to keep in mind that dieting is never a healthy way to approach nutrition. The [statistics](#) show that 95% of diets fail, and 1 in 4 dieters will develop an eating disorder.

“It is also crucial to point out that there also is no such thing as “clean,” “good,” or “bad” foods. Food has no moral value. When we ingest it, it does not make us a good or bad person. Our bodies and brains need all sorts of nutrients to function, including fats and carbs. In addition, different bodies have different nutritional needs. There is no one-size-fits-all method of healthy eating. The best way to encourage good eating habits is to focus on making small, sustainable lifestyle choices that do not involve restriction” said Resnick.

Jocelyn's road to recovery began when she started taking nutrition and fitness classes during her undergraduate studies at Binghamton University. She re-learned to treat food as fuel and physical activity as strength. One resource that was particularly helpful was the [Health at Every Size](#) literature. Health at Every Size, also referred to as HAES, is an inclusivity-focused movement that seeks to support people of all shapes and sizes in improving their lives by adopting healthy behaviors, rather than focusing on body weight. Jocelyn developed the mindset that [All Foods Fit](#) and began eating more [intuitively](#).

As Jocelyn continued on her process of recovery, she discovered that disordered eating is a cycle. When we foster a mindset of restriction, we do more damage than good to our bodies. Restrictive eating puts our brain in fight-or-flight mode and increases cravings, which can often result in binge-eating, followed by guilt and shame. When you break this cycle and allow

yourself to eat what you want in amounts that feel good for your body, you also cut down cravings, making it easier to continue a consistently healthy lifestyle. As a whole, it is best to search for a balance of nutritious but non-restrictive eating, which will nourish a healthy relationship with food and your body. Learning these principles helped Jocelyn get back in control of her habits, and led to a healthier relationship with food.

Here are some final tips from Jocelyn on how to care for your personal health in a stable, sustainable way:

1. Our bodies are designed to move. Find a form of physical activity that is fun and that feels good. Fitness is a form of self-care and self-compassion. It should never be treated as a punishment for what you ate.
2. When teaching yourself to listen to your body, start small- work on noticing what feels good and what gives you energy throughout the day. As you become more in tune with your body, focus on the foods that make your body feel its best. And of course, remember to still let yourself have the ice cream!
3. Finally, think more about your wellness as a whole- physical as well as mental, social, spiritual and professional. All of these go hand in hand, and each are equally important.

Jocelyn's recovery journey ultimately led her to being an all-around healthier and happier person. Now, she works as a Health Educator, helping students with their own journey. If her story resonated with you and you want to reach out to her yourself, you can email her at Jocelyn.Resnick@health.gatech.edu. An additional resource to refer to if you are seeking help is the [National Eating Disorders Association](#). There are also numerous resources available to you on campus. You can reach out to the [Health Initiatives dietitians](#) or the [Women's Resource Center](#).