



BRIGHT LINE EATINGTM

Live Happy Thin & Free



The 3 Huge Mistakes

That Almost
Everyone Makes
When They Try
To Lose Weight

By Susan Peirce Thompson, Ph.D.

It's Friday night and Sarah is at the movies with a friend. It's been a long week. She stayed much later than she planned to at work, responding to emails and dealing with some last-minute issues. She feels drained and irritable, partly because work is so stressful, partly because she just had to replace the transmission on her car, and partly because she's on a diet and isn't allowing herself to eat the way she normally would.



Photo by: Hadock

She's excited about the diet, though. She heard about it on TV and immediately bought the book. She read through it in three days and got started right away. She visualized what finally losing all her excess weight would mean to her. She journaled about how she wants to feel comfortable in her body, look decent in a swimsuit, and shop for clothes without getting depressed. She'd like to have more energy, too. She's sick and tired of feeling sick and tired. For over a decade she's had the nagging feeling that she's not living her right life, and she knows that a big part of it is that she's not in her right body. It's finally time to do something about that.

Right now, though, she's legitimately hungry. Because she worked late, she missed dinner. She was good and avoided the vending machines at work, but when she finally left the office it was time to head directly to the movie theater.



Photo by: Deborah Breen Whiting

She and her friend have bought their tickets and are walking into the lobby. Her friend ambles over to stand in line at the concession stand, so Sarah does too. After her friend orders, Sarah hesitates for a moment. Finally, she decides to get a small popcorn, no butter, a diet Coke, and a box of her favorite chocolate candy. She rationalizes that the popcorn's not too bad, without the butter, and the diet Coke is fine because it has no calories. Clearly the chocolate is an indiscretion, but she went to the gym on her lunch hour, and she hasn't even had any dinner. She's practically starving. She'll get back on track first thing tomorrow morning.

But she doesn't. When she gets home from the movies something psychologists call the "what-the-hell effect" kicks in. (No joke—that's the technical term.) Because Sarah broke her diet at the movies and plans to get back on track the following morning, in the meantime she says "what the hell" and grabs a bag of chips to eat while watching TV. Then she heads to the freezer and finishes off the ice cream. The next day she feels sick and remorseful. She gets back on her diet, but within two weeks the exceptions are coming more frequently, she isn't losing weight anymore, and before long the bright and shiny weight-loss special that held so much promise has joined the ranks of the dozens of other attempts in Sarah's not-so-illustrious past.

I'm curious about something: Where do you think Sarah went wrong? At home when she gave herself permission to eat the chips and ice cream? At the movie theater when she walked up to the snack bar? Back at the office when she prioritized work over dinner? I propose that Sarah's dieting attempt went wrong way before that. But it wasn't her fault. Sarah is no different than any of us. She simply made the Three Huge Mistakes that almost everyone makes when they try to lose weight.

I learned about these mistakes—and how to avoid them—well over a decade ago and it radically changed my life. Back in 2003, a couple of years after my weight had officially climbed past the obese marker on the BMI chart, a friend took the time to teach me a method of eating that had been developed and refined over decades of trial-and-error in the underground community of food addicts in 12-step recovery programs. I was drowning in a sea of depression, hopelessness, and failed dieting attempts and grabbed on to the solution she gave me like a life preserver. I was ready to change. In a few months I went from a size 16 to a size 4, and I remain a size 4 to this day.



Since then, I have spent nearly all my spare time helping others to lose their excess weight and keep it off. I have also been investigating the psychology and neuroscience of eating and weight loss to figure out what makes this method of eating so unusually successful where most methods fail. I am lucky that my background is perfectly suited to the task—I'm a psychology professor with a Ph.D. in Brain and Cognitive Sciences and for years I taught a college course on the psychology of eating. I am passionate about sharing the science of successful weight loss with anyone who wants to learn and is ready to make a change.

It is in that spirit that this free report is offered. So without further ado, here they are: the Three Huge Mistakes that almost everyone makes when they try to lose weight.

Huge Mistake #1: **Relying on Willpower**

The First Huge Mistake that almost everyone makes when they try to lose weight is that they rely on their willpower. When they start a new diet they learn which foods to eat and which foods to avoid, and then they just assume that their willpower will be there to keep them on track when they grab their plate and start heading down the buffet line.

Well guess what? It doesn't work like that. It turns out that willpower is not a loyal friend. It has gaps. Huge gaps. It coughs. It sputters. It leaves the room entirely. It takes the baby and absconds to Arizona.

This is such a reliable phenomenon that I've given it a name. I call it the Willpower Gap. And there's a lot of research explaining why it occurs.

First of all, willpower is actually a thing. (This was a huge discovery; until recently, scientists weren't even sure that "willpower" existed. But it does.) It's a unitary power source inside us, like a battery. When we want to do something, or we want **not** to do something, it can be called on to see us through. However, if the battery is depleted already, we won't be able to summon the needed power. Typically, when that happens, we unconsciously convince ourselves that we didn't really want to do that thing anyway, or we rationalize that we deserve to indulge in this one-time temptation. In those moments, we have just fallen prey to the Willpower Gap.

Willpower is limited. Scientists estimate that we have only about 15 minutes at our disposal before the battery runs dry. To make matters worse, a whole host of thoughts, emotions, and activities can deplete it.

Here's a quick list:

- *Resisting temptations*
- *Persevering on tasks*
- *Monitoring our performance*
- *Making decisions*
- *Regulating our thoughts or emotional responses*



Photo by: Ryan McGuire

The trouble is, we are doing these things nearly all day every day, so there's no way to ensure that our willpower will be fully charged when we need it most. In fact, research shows that the average person spends a total of four hours each day just trying (and often failing) to resist temptations alone.

Want to know what's scary? There is yet another scourge that short-circuits our willpower even faster than any of the items listed above, and it explains why willpower is especially unreliable when it comes to food. Here goes. The horrible truth. Our willpower doesn't perform properly when our blood sugar is low. Yup. That's right. The seat of willpower in the brain, the anterior cingulate cortex, absolutely requires blood sugar for fuel, and any dip below average levels will handicap its functioning.

So ironic. And so cruel. When our blood sugar has dropped and we need to get something to eat, the very physiology of our state at that moment makes it all the more unlikely that we will make a wise choice. Combine that with the constant availability of sweet, highly-processed foods and the difficulty of even finding a fresh, healthy option when you're on the go, and the Willpower Gap helps to explain the current global obesity pandemic that we now face. But it doesn't fully explain it. After all, the Willpower Gap has been around for a long time, but over the past 30 years, obesity rates have skyrocketed. Right along with key changes in our food supply. Which brings us to the Second Huge Mistake.

Huge Mistake #2: **Underestimating the Addictive Power of Refined Foods**

How do they make cocaine? Any idea?

They take the essence of the coca leaf and refine and purify it into a white powder. Coca leaves are not hugely addictive on their own. Chewing on one will create some numbness in the cheek followed by a mild, 45-minute lift, somewhat akin to drinking a cup of coffee. But in the refined form, cocaine powder is highly addictive.

How do they make heroin? In the same way, except with the poppy plant. They take its essence and refine and purify it into a white (or brown) powder.

How do they make sugar? You guessed it. They take the essence of the sugar cane plant and refine and purify it into a white powder.



Photo by: Ryan McGuire

Finally, how do they make flour? In this case a number of plants can be used. To make flour they simply take the inner essence of any grain or legume and refine and purify it into a white (or brown) powder.

If you are like most people, the foods that cause you cravings are not in their original, out-of-the-ground form. Odds are that you crave foods made from the ubiquitous fine powders manufactured by the food industry. As Michael Pollan puts it, they're not really foods anymore at all but rather "edible food-like substances."

Foods that are in their whole, unadulterated state interact in the brain the way nature intended. In contrast, "edible food-like substances" made out of sugar and flour release an unnatural flood of dopamine that hijacks the pleasure centers in the brain (the ventral tegmental area and nucleus accumbens) and cause cravings.

This is not a theory. A very large body of scientific research confirms that processed foods light up the very same addiction pathways in the brain as heroin and cocaine. And when food addiction researchers ask people to list the foods that they crave, that they obsess about, and that they eat more of than they planned, those foods fall into two broad categories: sugar products like candy, chocolate, ice cream, cake, soda, and cookies, and flour products like pizza, pasta, bread, bagels, crackers, and chips. It's no coincidence that as the prevalence of refined powders in our food supply has increased, obesity rates have soared. In fact today, 80% of the 600,000 foods available on supermarket shelves are laced with added sugar alone.

But wait a minute. How come your neighbor, and your friend at work, can eat these foods all they want and stay slender? And never (or hardly ever) have cravings? What's up with that?

The unfair truth is that not everyone is equally susceptible to the addictive properties of these “edible food-like substances.”

This makes sense, if you think about it. We know that alcohol is addictive, but plenty of people can have a drink here and there, even every day, and never develop alcoholism. Caffeine is addictive, but some folks can have coffee or tea when they want a pick-me-up and not get hooked. Some people can smoke cigarettes or cigars once in a while and never develop the habit.



Photo by: Jainny / Jane M.

In much the same way, many people are just not very susceptible to the addictive properties of refined foods. On the other end of the spectrum, there are people like me who are extremely, outrageously, ridiculously susceptible. And then there's everyone in-between.

Interestingly, rats are like this too. About one-third of rats are simply not very susceptible to addictive substances. One-third are highly susceptible. And one-third fall somewhere in between.

So how susceptible are you?

The answer to this question is the key to getting trim and enjoying freedom from food obsession, excess weight, and dieting for the rest of your life. You can find out how susceptible you are by answering the five short questions at www.FoodFreedomQuiz.com

After you've taken the quiz, you'll be well-equipped to address Huge Mistake #3.

Huge Mistake #3: **Building in Exceptions**



Photo by: Karolina Grabowska

Most people think that if they have permission to go off their diet once in a while it will make the whole endeavor of losing weight a lot easier. And most weight-loss programs cater to this belief by incorporating exceptions into the very structure of their food plan. Perhaps they allow for a “cheat” meal once a week. Or maybe a whole “cheat day.” Perhaps the program sells little brownies that are “only one point” or provides a list of treats that you should “eat sparingly.”

The irony is that building in exceptions doesn’t work. It’s supposed to make it easier to stick with the diet, but for most people it makes it harder. It keeps your taste buds from learning to prefer real, wholesome food. It keeps your brain from making the changes required for a sustainable shift in behavior and identity. And it keeps you hooked on refined powders—those “edible food-like substances.”

Now, to be sure, these built-in exceptions are very effective for some people—the people who are on the “not susceptible” end of the spectrum. When they have a craving for a specific food and then they indulge it, the craving goes away. They eat one serving and no more. Then they go right back to their sensible way of eating and are completely satisfied, often for days. The rest of us watch them do this and naturally expect that indulging in exceptions will work for us, too.

But sadly, for the majority of us, giving in to a craving has the opposite effect—it intensifies the craving. Like what happened with Sarah: one exception leads to the what-the-hell effect and a flood of unrestrained eating. Or maybe nothing quite that dramatic happens, but a few hours later yet another hankering appears for yet another treat. Either way, the reality is that for those of us who are “somewhat” or “very” susceptible to the addictive properties of refined foods, those built-in exceptions don’t make it easier to lose weight, they make it harder.



Photo by: Unsplash

The fact that our society doesn’t recognize this is a huge barrier to success for the millions of people who are trying to lose weight and reclaim their health and vitality. By and large, people don’t push cigarettes on non-smokers, or alcohol on people who say, “No thank you, I don’t drink.” Imagine a world in which, when someone says, “No thank you, I don’t eat sugar,” the host says, “Oh! Good for you,” instead of, “But it’s George’s birthday! One piece of cake won’t hurt you.”

Where Does This Leave Us?

So there they are. The Three Huge Mistakes that almost everyone makes when they try to lose weight. They rely on their willpower, underestimate the addictive power of refined foods, and indulge in built-in exceptions. What's the root cause of these mistakes? Surely misinformation plays a role. But I believe the more fundamental problem is that most people dramatically underestimate what it really takes to lose weight. This is such a common pitfall that we might as well call it the Fourth Huge Mistake.

Now, to be sure, lots of people lose some weight. But then they gain it right back again. I'm assuming this is not what you want to do. I'm assuming you want to lose all of your excess weight, and then keep it off.

The sad reality is that the odds of doing that are microscopically small. In fact, it is reasonable to estimate, based on a careful examination of the best available data, that only one one-hundredth of one percent (.01%) of extremely overweight or obese people manage to get slender and stay slender long-term.¹

So don't underestimate the task ahead. Losing weight and keeping it off is extraordinarily hard. You probably already know that deep down. How could it be otherwise? There are over one hundred million dieters in the United States alone, and over the years that number has been rising, not falling. If there were an easy way, everyone would already be doing it.

But it is possible. I've done it; I've helped countless others to do it; and I'm happy to show you how to do it, too. Keep in mind, though, that this method of eating will only work if you are prepared for the task ahead. This is not a solution for people who need it. Lots of people need it. It's a solution for people who want it.

So it's time to be honest with yourself:

Do you really want to change?

*Are you willing to do
whatever it takes?*



Photo by: Alba Soler

¹ The number of successful weight loss maintainers in the National Weight Control Registry is 10,000. Divide this by the number of Americans who were on a diet in 2015, which, according to the 13th Edition of the U.S. Weight Loss and Diet Control Market report is 108 million, and you get roughly .0001 or .01%. Of course there are mitigating factors, which I'm happy to spell out later, but after they are all accounted for this basic figure still emerges.

What is the Solution?

The solution, revolutionary and powerful, is called...



BRIGHT LINE EATING™

Live Happy Thin & Free

Bright Lines are boundaries that you just don't cross, no matter what. And when you stick to them, you get consistent and predictable results. I don't know about you, but when it comes to my weight, "consistent and predictable results" sound good. Very good.

A Bright Line helps to bridge the Willpower Gap because it reduces the need for making decisions in the moment. You make the decision up front, ahead of time, and then it's done.

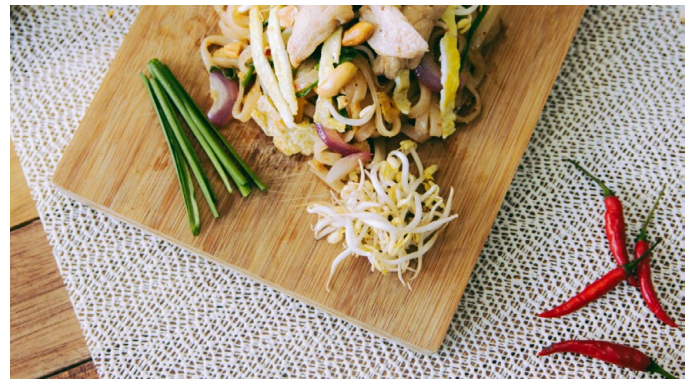
But is sticking with Bright Lines even possible? Why doesn't the Willpower Gap sabotage the Bright Lines?

That's the genius of it. Bright Line Eating doesn't rely on willpower. It relies on three much more powerful tools: **planning, preparation, and habit.**

Think about it this way: is it possible for someone to brush their teeth, twice a day, every day, for decades? Why yes, yes it is.

Take cigarettes as another example. Quitting smoking is hard. For some people, super hard. But it's doable. Can you imagine a hard-core smoker successfully quitting if, in the name of "moderation" and being "realistic" they justified taking a puff off a cigarette every now and then?

There may be some people who succeed with that strategy, but isn't it true that most people who are successful at quitting smoking use a Bright Line for cigarettes? And with that Bright Line in place, doesn't their identity gradually shift until, at some point, they define themselves as a non-smoker? Over time, abstaining from smoking gets easier and easier, until eventually it becomes a way of life.



Bright Line Eating follows the same principles. It's hard at first, and then it gets easier.² And contrary to what most people expect, after some time has passed, the cravings go away. This happens because five very specific changes take place in the brain that make all those "edible food-like substances" just fall off the radar screen.

When that happens, all that's left is a happy, free feeling. And, of course, a healthy, trim body.

I have been following Bright Line Eating for the better part of thirteen years, and from one day to the next my level of temptation fluctuates between zero and hardly any. Even when people all around me are eating junk, I don't want any. In fact, I hardly notice. It's exactly as if they're smoking, and I don't smoke anymore. Seeing someone smoke isn't a trigger. In fact, it's a little gross. It's the same for all those "edible food-like substances." Bright Line Eating is the roadmap for finally getting free. Happy, thin, and free.

² The initial difficulty varies dramatically from person to person. Most people find it challenging at first. But for some, Bright Line Eating is relatively easy right from the start.

Where do we go from here?

So, how exactly does Bright Line Eating work? What's involved?

It includes two Bright Lines for what to eat, two Bright Lines for how to eat, a specific weight-loss food plan, and a roadmap for maintaining that weight loss indefinitely.

To bridge the Willpower Gap, there are concrete tools of planning and preparation that will allow you to stick with your Bright Lines, one day at a time, until getting thin and healthy, and staying thin and healthy, has become a way of life. I promise to share all the details, but this can't be done in one day because the content could easily fill a book (my next project). I will email you tomorrow and start spelling it all out. All you have to do is open my email and the journey will begin.

Of course, if you got this free report from a friend, you won't magically get an email from me. But not to worry, you can sign up for my email list at <https://ble.life/a53u>.



Photo by: Ernie Cruz

Once signed up, you will get the details you need on:

- *The five tools that are essential for bridging the Willpower Gap*
 - *How you can tell if your willpower has run dry*
 - *The two essential components of a successful food plan*
 - *The one thing you can do each morning to triple your odds of following your food plan that day*
 - *How Bright Line Eating lifts depression*
 - *The one most essential tool for weight loss success (hint: you can buy it in any strip mall and it costs less than \$50)*
 - *Why you may be sabotaging your efforts by eating too many small meals each day*
 - *The five changes that happen in your brain that make Bright Line Eating easier and easier over time*
 - *Why you don't need to start exercising right away when you're trying to lose weight—and why it's probably even better if you don't*
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They say a picture is worth a thousand words. In that spirit, I want to leave you with a visual image of how Bright Line Eating is actually applied in daily life. Remember Sarah?

Let's imagine for a moment that the book she had read was called **Bright Line Eating**. Looking back, what would have been different about that fateful Friday night when her weight-loss endeavor started to crumble? Let's rewind the tape and take a peek.

It's Friday night and Sarah is out at the movies with a friend. It's been a long week. She feels drained and irritable because she's got a lot going on. Work is stressful and she's just had major car troubles. But boy is she excited about her new way of eating! She's been following it for over a month now, and it's already getting easier.

Last night, right after dinner, she took a look in the fridge and planned out what she was going to eat for today. She had been to the grocery store the day before, so there were lots of options. It only took about three minutes to make her choices. She wrote down her plan in her little book along with a big "Day #34" right at the top. Sweet.





Photo by: Jill Wellington

Now, though, she's confronted with the snack bar at the movie theater. Her friend walks over and stands in line. Sarah hardly skips a beat. Her Bright Lines are clear—she knows she has no business even approaching the counter. She tells her friend that she's going to the restroom before the movie starts, and she'll meet her in the theater. She's not even hungry anyway. She packed her dinner last night and ate it at work. It was filling and delicious—just what the doctor ordered at the end of her long, exhausting week.

On the way home Sarah puts on the car radio and relaxes into the song. This Bright Line Eating thing is different. She can feel it in her bones. She still has a lot of weight to lose, but it's melting off, and she knows it's just a matter of time. But the weight doesn't seem to matter as much anymore. She feels happy, thin, and free already.

P.S. – I wrote this document during my spare moments in the summer of 2014 and made it available for free at www.HappyThinAndFree.com on August 5th of that year. What has transpired since then absolutely astounds me. So far this message has reached over 200,000 people! Bright Line Eating has become nothing short of a movement, and thousands upon thousands of people are now living Happy, Thin, and Free because of it.

So....welcome! I'm glad you're on board to learn more. And, if you ever want to stop hearing from me, just use the "unsubscribe" link at the bottom of every email.

I aim to inform, nurture, and inspire, never to bore or annoy. And now...buckle up, because learning about Bright Line Eating is a magical ride! XOXO



Susan

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