



WHAT TO SAY WHEN . . .

Goal: The goal of this hand-out is to help food addicts protect themselves from people who push processed foods.

Application: In our culture, processed foods are in widespread use. Often, friends, colleagues, and family are very attached to processed foods and want clients to use them too. Without meaning to, they may become 'pushers' of processed foods. It's helpful for clients to find ways to protect themselves from these pushers and their suggestions.

At the same time, many food addicts suffer from 'relationship sensitivity' stemming from repeated exposure to unfair and harsh judgements. This may make it difficult for food addicts to stand up for themselves. With a little practice and preparation, food addicts can learn to stop the pusher while maintaining civility.

In some cases, food addicts may want or need to retain personal or professional relationships with these pushers, so it's helpful to find a way to stop them without giving offence. Sometimes they just need a bit of education. Being consistent in avoidance of processed foods will help reinforce boundaries.

If the clients is going to be seeing difficult people, the client can practice saying the phrases shown below out loud. Clients can visualize the person and pretend that they're speaking the phrase to them. By rehearsing in the 'planning' part of the brain, clients may find that they are more prepared and calm when the moment comes to set the boundary.

Here are some short, easy, effective responses to invitations to use processed foods.

- The client is invited to a party where a meal is being served but the clients know there won't be anything they want to eat. The client can say to the host,

- "I'll bring my meal. I've just learned that I have about 300 food allergies so I'll bring what I need. I can eat a salad of raw vegetables without dressing if you are serving that."

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A waiter is not paying attention or is reluctant to go ask the chef about something.

- "I'm asking because if I get even a small quantity, I have a violent allergic reaction . . . sudden projectile vomiting."

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A person persists in insisting that you have something, 'Just one bite won't hurt.'

- "Even one bite would give me a violent headache and cravings for four days."

- "I have joined a Group where we all promised one another that we wouldn't eat processed foods, even one bite. I can't let them down."

- A person explains in detail how their regimen works so well (except that they're also sharing about their hospitalizations.)

- “I’m glad you found something that works for you.”

Someone finally asks you what you eat. (It can take between 2 and 10 years of someone watching your food before they ask.) Keep it very short and stop if they seem disinterested. All you’re doing is planting a seed that may take years to sprout.

- “I don’t eat anything that’s been processed such as foods that are in a package or have a label.”
- If they want to know more, you can say, “I eat eggs, chicken, turkey, fish, shrimp for protein, and I eat sweet potato, rice, beans, peas, and butternut squash as unprocessed starches. I eat vegetables and low-sugar fruits.
- If they still want to know more, you can say, “I avoid sugars, flours, processed fats, excessive salt, and dairy.”
- If they are jumping up and down with excitement, get their email address and send them the lists of food (or carry copies of the Lists in your car). If they’re looking indifferent or shocked, change the topic. Never insist or go on unless they’re genuinely interested.

A health professional says that food addiction doesn’t exist.

- Hand the professional the *Handout for Health Professionals. It contains a list of studies showing that chronic overeaters act, walk, talk, and behave like drug addicts. The studies also show that food plans which eliminate processed foods work to reduce diet-related diseases.*

Someone insists ‘all things in moderation.’

- Ask them if that applies to cigarettes. Share that there is research showing that processed foods are more harmful than cigarettes. (Depression, anxiety, irritability, diabetes, amputations, heart disease, paralyzing stroke, irritable bowel syndrome, dementia, ADD, joint damage, etc.) Carry the hand-out showing the list of diseases associated with processed foods.

‘But I made it just for you! It’s your favorite!’

- You can get ahead of this situation by letting the cooks in your life know that you’re no longer eating any kind of sweeteners, flour, or dairy. But if someone persists, here are two things you can say.
- “I’m sure you’ll be glad for me to know that after all these years, I’ve discovered that sweeteners, flour, and dairy make me sick in many ways.
- Here’s a recipe for bars that I can eat. Mix 3 eggs with ½ c gluten-free oats that have been soaked for a few minutes in ¼ c water. Mix in 6 oz chopped apples and 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Pour into a casserole dish that has been greased with 2 teaspoons of coconut oil. Bake for 25 minutes at 350’. I would be so grateful if you made that for me.”

Someone shames you by saying that you should have more control, be stronger, have better will-power, etc.

- You can say, ‘I have so much control that I’m not even going to start.’ Move away from that emotionally abusive person.

Someone exclaims, 'Dairy is healthy!'

- Research shows that dairy contains four different opiates. It also contains fat, sugar (lactose), and hormones. It appears to be designed to put a very large baby calf to sleep while the calf absorbs nutrients and gains 500 lbs. in one year.
- Concentrating dairy into cheese is like concentrating poppies into heroin.
- Then they chime in, 'Oh, but I drink SKIM milk!'
- By removing the fat, research shows that the sugar (lactose) reaches the brain faster and activates the addictive pathways more than full-fat dairy products.
- You've been doing so well, you should reward yourself.
- I've gotten a lot of benefits that I don't want to give up. Even one bite would bring back the cravings.
- Other good responses include:
- I'm working on an elimination diet with my doctor so I just can't have that right now.
- I've been clean off of processed foods for a long time and I've gotten a lot of results so I'm not going to break that streak.
- Change the topic to a compliment. That will encourage your pursuer to talk about themselves.
- Don't talk about food while someone is eating. You can say, 'one of my rules is to not talk about food while eating.'
- Do limit your comments to your own experience so avoid the appearance of giving unsolicited advice. Start sentences with, 'In my opinion...,' or 'This is just something that works for me.'

Sometimes it can take several years for someone to come back to the client and ask again about what they eat. People may not be willing to change until they get a medical diagnosis, or someone in their family becomes sick. Always be patient and courteous. Beware the person who is in a big rush. Encourage them to take things slowly.

It's helpful to remember that clients live in an epidemic of a terrible disease of processed food consumption. Clients won't be able to save those who need it, no matter how desperate the situation, unless they're ready. It's rare to find someone who is ready. Start with just the food lists and encourage them to get processed foods out of their house and replace them with the unprocessed foods. When they're comfortable with that, then perhaps give them the food plan so they can begin to assemble their unprocessed ingredients into meals. Be careful not to overwhelm them. If they're on Facebook, clients can encourage them to join one of the food addiction groups while assuring them that they're probably not a food addict! Generally refrain from diagnosing people. Let them come to their own realization on their own.

Handling pushers with short, effective phrases will help clients feel powerful enough to take care of themselves without being rude or alienating people. This is a phrase borrowed from Al-anon, 'Be bold, be brief, be done/gone.'

You may find that you're ready to avoid people who are hyper-persistent, or who emotionally abuse you through teasing, ridicule, or shame. Through your calm collective behavior, you will show people that you mean business. You can do this!