

## Coping with Sabotage

Sabotaging behaviors can come in different forms:

**Statements to invoke guilt-** “You don’t come out to eat with us anymore...are you too good for us?” or “I spent all day baking your favorite foods....just try a small piece of cake.”

**Using temptation tactics-** Examples can include leaving junk food around the house, or making statements such as, “You’ve worked so hard...don’t you deserve a special treat.”

**Behaviors or statements of exclusion-** Excluding you from dinner plans or statements such as, “You just don’t see seem to be as much fun now that you lost weight.”

**Negative or critical statements:** “Don’t 95% of people gain their weight back after surgery?” or “You look too skinny...are you sure you are healthy?”

## How to Cope

1. Don’t take these behaviors personally. You cannot assume that your loved one is deliberately trying to hurt you. Be polite but firm. Avoid being aggressive or insulting.
2. Improve Communication- the burden falls to the person losing weight to express how he or she feels and how the family can help
3. Encourage your family or friends to express their feelings, concerns, etc about your plans, progress, etc on losing weight
4. Tell them how to help- Loved ones cannot read your mind.
5. Make specific requests, instead of “don’t eat in front of me,” state: “It helps me when you eat your evening bowl of ice cream in the other room.”
6. State your requests positively- i.e. “I appreciate the times when you don’t offer me food.”
7. Reward your partner- one way relationships don’t last long

## Reasons why others might be pressuring your to eat:

- They may be uncomfortable eating in front of you.
- They may be self conscious of their own body image or health status.
- There might be control issues or feelings of competition. They may be jealous of your success- Discuss their feelings. Re-assure them that your feelings for them will not change after you lose weight.

- They may not want you to succeed—If you experienced demoralizing statements, such as “you have always failed before and will fail again,” ignore these comments. Confronting the person rarely helps and can make the situation worse. This is their problem....don't let it influence you.
- They think you are starving- Since so many people associate food with love, encouraging you to eat is one way to show concern. Assure them that you are fine and that they can help you by ignoring your diet and by not offering you food.
- They want to test your determination- Show them how serious you can be.

### **Things your support network can do**

- Keep a positive attitude
- Keep the home and family relaxed
- Learn to ignore and forgive lapses
- Ask the person losing weight how you can help
- Exercise with the person
- Develop new interests with the family member losing weight