

## **Title: Effective, Sustainable Weight Loss Starts with Listening to the Body**

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When people come to me for help with weight loss, they often feel like they are at the end of the line. They report to me that they've tried "everything" and they declare their metabolism just doesn't work anymore. More times than I can count, I have heard, "I have tried every diet known and I cannot lose weight. My metabolism is broken".

A person's metabolism may be inefficient. It might be struggling to be flexible and resilient after years of "abuse" (from extreme and prolonged efforts to lose weight). A person's metabolism might be misunderstood... but "Broken"? Hardly. If your metabolism were broken, you'd really know it (you'd be dead!).

"Metabolism" is just another way of saying, "Our ability to break down food and produce energy" (which includes tissue repair and healing). Part of our metabolisms' core job function is to be "responsive" and "adaptive." Food used to be challenging to come by, and we never really knew what or how much or when we'd eat next. Our metabolism is constantly responding and adapting to what and how we are asking it to do its job of breaking down food and producing energy. It never stops doing that; it just changes the way it does that based on our choices.

When we ask our bodies to do this task with too many restrictions (for too long), it becomes less efficient at breaking down food and making energy. How far can you ask your car to drive on fumes? Down your driveway? Probably. To the nearest gas station? If you're lucky. Across country? No way, right? So why do we keep asking our bodies to do the equivalent of running on fumes indefinitely? We can see that the model doesn't work for a simple machine. Why do we insist that it should work for something as complex as being human? Is there some kind of magic in our bodies that allow us to produce "something from nothing"?

The idea that weight loss is a simple math equation of creating a wide calorie deficit (eat a little + exercise a lot) is incomplete. Eating less food and exercising more does result in some weight loss. But it can't result in weight loss indefinitely because metabolism adapts to this "stress" by conserving fuel (by getting less efficient at using fuel). If you are in a famine or crisis, are you quick to use up every last bit of your resources, or are you more inclined to hold on to that precious resource keeping you alive for as long as possible?

Creating a big calorie gap, for long periods of time, puts significant stress on your metabolism. This stress causes your metabolism (your ability to utilize fuel) to go down. You'll know you're at this point when your weight loss stalls. That's your metabolism

telling you it has adapted to the stress you created. That means it's time to try something new. And yeah, that often means slowing down weight loss. The good news is that slow weight loss equates to more extended success. Less dramatic drops in weight are more easily maintained and less likely to return.

Said another way, high levels of "stress" on the metabolism make it more difficult to lose weight over time and more challenging to maintain lost weight. Overly restricting calories coupled with high amounts of vigorous exercise can actually become an obstacle to weight loss.

### **Things To Consider:**

- Have you successfully lost weight with a particular approach only to have it "stop working"?
- Do you feel it stopped working because you "Failed" at maintaining a highly restrictive or structured regiment?
- Have you tried "changing it up" by getting more extreme, such as eliminating entire food groups or limiting your access to when you eat?
- Does the idea of trying (again) to do what you used to do to lose weight (again!) feel completely exhausting to you?
- What if weight loss could be achieved with less "efforting" (forcing yourself to follow a rigid structure) and more "listening" (responding)?

Let me help you learn to listen and respond to what your metabolism is saying to you. It's not sabotaging you; it's a mirror reflecting back to you what you're asking it to adapt to. Learn more at [kristenallott.com/clinical-2020](https://kristenallott.com/clinical-2020).