



Teaching teens about why diets don't work:

Based on advice from Elyse Resch, MS, RDN, CEDRD-S

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To help a teen understand diet culture, and why diets don't work:

- (1) Ask: how do you feel when you're told to do something?
 - They will often say that they then don't want to do it (in their developmental stage, it's healthy and normal to balk at authority!)
- (2) Draw the connection that:
 - Being told from the outside what to eat (by a diet, meal plan, instagram post about good and foods, etc.) invades your boundaries, autonomy, and inner wisdom.
 - Only you can possibly know which foods you like and don't, when you're hungry, or full, how food can comfort you, how satisfied you feel after a meal, and more.
- (3) Point out that diet culture claims to answer those questions for everyone, but that following its external rules doesn't honor your inner knowledge and wisdom.

To help a teen understand deprivation, and why diets don't work:

- (1) Ask: how do you feel when you don't get to have something you want?
 - They will often point out that they want it even more, or think about it constantly.
- (2) Draw the connection that:
 - Dieting or prescribed ways of eating are taking away many of the foods that you really want.
 - This can make you want them even more, focus on them, and overvalue them.

By The Full Bloom Project

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