

Principle 6: Challenge the Food Police

“The food police monitor the unreasonable rules that dieting has created. The police station is housed deep in your psyche, and its loudspeaker shouts negative barbs, hopeless phrases, and guilt-provoking indictments. Chasing the food police away is a critical step in returning to Intuitive Eating”.

(Tribole and Resch, 2025)



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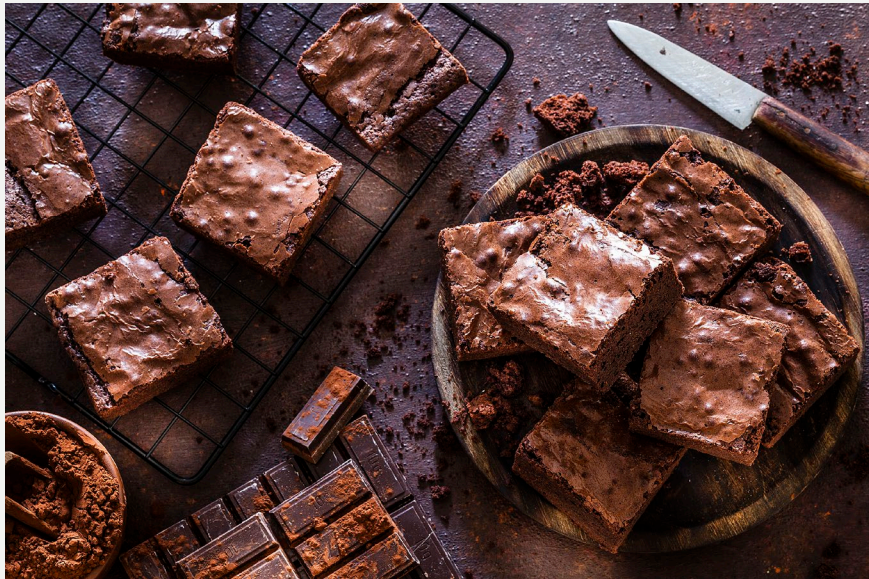
Principle 6: Challenge the Food Police

Think about the statements you say to yourself or hear in your mind related to food.

Identify statements that sound like rules or binaries (bad or good, all or nothing).



Example



“I’ve been so good on my diet the last few weeks.”

“I haven’t had any ice cream or candy or cookies.”

“I’d sure love to have one of those brownies, but I can’t- I shouldn’t- I won’t!”

“If I have a brownie, I’ll blow my diet.”

“I won’t be able to stop eating the brownies.”

“Oh, maybe just one will be okay.”

“Oh, no- I shouldn’t have done that.”

“I have no willpower.”

“I’m going to be out of control.”

“Will I ever be at peace with my body?”

Adapted from *Intuitive Eating*, 4th edition. *Tribole and Resch, 2020*



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Possible eating behaviors



Eat more brownies past the point of enjoyment and satisfaction.

Possibly feel uncomfortably full or feel sick.

Cancel social plans, not able to focus on schoolwork.

Adapted from *Intuitive Eating*, 4th edition. *Tribole and Resch*, 2020



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Possible feelings



Disappointment

Despair

Fear of future deprivation

Sadness

Fear of being out of control

Adapted from *Intuitive Eating*, 4th edition. *Tribole and Resch*, 2020

Same scenario, different experience



“Those brownies look good.”

“How do I think it would make me feel physically if I had one right now?”

“Yum, that was delicious.”

“I’m satisfied with just this one, although I could have a second if I wanted.”

Adapted from *Intuitive Eating*, 4th edition. *Tribole and Resch*, 2020



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Possible behaviors:



Eat enough to feel satisfied and not uncomfortably full.

Able to enjoy the rest of the event, the situation, and your day.

Adapted from *Intuitive Eating*, 4th edition. *Tribole and Resch*, 2020



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Possible feelings:



Satisfaction

Pleasure

Contentment (no worry about future deprivation)

Trust in internal signals,
gratitude for relationship with
food and body

Adapted from *Intuitive Eating, 4th edition*. Tribole and Resch, 2020



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Half-Empty	Half-Full
1. I had a terrible week.	1. I had some progress this week.
2. I overate so many times.	2. I had many times when I ate to satisfaction.
3. All I ate was sweets.	3. I had sweets more than I wished, but I had lots of other foods, too.
4. I feel so fat.	4. Fat is not a feeling, but it is a form of body shaming, rooted in diet culture and weight stigma. I am appreciating all the things my body can do.
5. I'm such a failure.	5. I'm doing better little by little.

From *Intuitive Eating*, fourth edition, Tribole and Resch, 2020.



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