

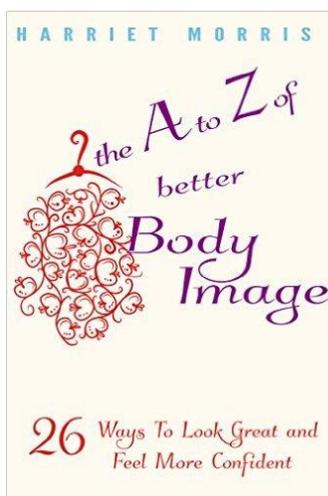
How to Get Kids and Teens to **Eat Better** and **Feel Better** About Themselves

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In this short report I am going to give you 3 big ideas to help any child or teenager eat more healthily. These are ideas that I use with my own children, who I can promise you do NOT live in a bubble of perfect diet. They go to parties, friend's houses, social events and school where unhealthy, addictive food is everywhere. They face the same challenges as your child. Having grown up under the shadow of my own food compulsion, I was determined from day one that food would not be the cause of stress for my boys that it was for me.

The main thing I want you to take away at the end of what I am about to teach you is that you can change their eating habits AND make them feel better about themselves at the same time.

IDEA #1 - THE POSITIVE ONSLAUGHT



In my book *The A to Z of Better Body Image*, I tell the story of my super active 8 year old son bemoaning his failure to achieve his 25mt swimming badge (he had just missed getting it)

"I know why I failed" he wailed. "It was my big fat tummy" - and he pointed to his decidedly *unbig*, *unfat* stomach as evidence for the (self) prosecution.

If a healthy boy of 8 who has never heard any negative comments about his body can feel ashamed of his physique, then we must understand that part of the process of helping our children involves some serious cultural damage limitation.

Children and teens are especially susceptible to the messages that culture transmits about how we should feel about ourselves, and culture - which is of course fueled by Hollywood and the diet/beauty industry - is vicious when it comes to body image. We are living in the age of airbrushed perfectionism - the idea that if you are not a skinny supermodel, you are ugly and worthless. This is like

saying that pleasant house you just moved to is nowhere near good enough because it is not a mansion. Or the promotion you got at work is nothing to celebrate because why aren't you working at Google?

I am sure you are nodding your head in agreement, even if it is hard to emotionally weather the onslaught of negative feelings that the media unleashes every time we see Beyonce or Johnny Depp or Angelina Jolie or a glamorous model in an advert.

If you think it's hard for you, then *it is 100 times harder for your child* because they most likely do not have the intellectual capacity to understand that their negative feelings are unhelpful. They have fallen hook, line and sinker for the toxic lies that airbrushed perfectionism peddles, because their sense of self is not yet fully developed. They haven't really started out in life and they have already condemned themselves to social failure.

So what can you do? How can you make changes in your child's diet in the face of this cultural onslaught, this pressure to achieve the impossible?

You start by mounting your own onslaught.

But a positive one.

You are going to set up a healthy challenge that will be based entirely on their behaviour around food and activity if you think they need more exercise. No weigh ins. No waist measurements. Your child needs to see positive feedback from day one. Behavioural change offers this in spades, whereas saving all your praise for the scales is too hard for your child.

The good news is that you are not trying to change the world - just your child's world. And you have huge power in this area.

If you have been unwittingly trying to shame your child into change, you need to do a massive and conscious U-turn.

Here are some things to say. You need to decide which ones are appropriate for your child, depending on their age and maturity, as well as if they suffer from feelings of inadequacy.

"I want to apologise for giving you a hard time about your eating. You know what I have realised? That lots of people have problems with food. This isn't your fault."

A body confidence board may be appropriate for a teenager. This is a collage of pictures of non-size 0 models and celebrities. Over time it will shift their idea of what beauty and sexiness is on an emotional level. You can see an example of this here:

<http://www.theshiftinside.com/vision/>

IDEA #2: No Child Is an Island

One of the most powerful things you can do with your child or teen is to dive in and do their challenge with them. If you yourself are not modelling behaviours you want your child to develop around food, you lose any authority in this area. You simply cannot ban sodas from their diet while indulging in them yourself.

And no, you do **not** have to be a paragon of virtue. This is a great opportunity to model overcoming struggles. "I really want food X, but I am going to do something else instead" puts every diet sheet in the world to shame. Share the cravings busters and ask which ones are the most useful, and even fun! Imagine how powerful it is for your child to see you improving your own diet alongside them, even if – especillay if – you are not doing it perfectly.

If you have a healthy diet, choose another area of life you want to optimise and share your struggles and strategies for overcoming obstacles.

As long as your child feels you are in this thing together, they will feel far more motivated to change.

IDEA #3: You'll Like This - Not Alot, But You'll Like It

I grew up here in the UK with the above phrase a regular catchphrase coming out of my TV in the 80's. Magician Paul Daniels used to say it all the time. No idea why.

Anyway, you probably won't like this idea at all - but you will love how it is going to lift so much struggle off your child or teen's shoulders.

Empty your cupboards of the junk.

If it is not there, they can't consume it.

If someone you loved was just out of The Betty Ford Centre - a recovering alcoholic -and they came to stay, would you stock your fridge with wine and beer for the week?

Of course you wouldn't.

So why then do millions of families around the world fill their kitchens with products laden with processed sugar, hydrogenated fats and high fructose corn syrup – while obsessing over weight loss and fretting over childhood obesity?

In my work and experience talking to other parents, I have found that there are two reasons for this madness:

1. Because in the minds of the adults, junk food is highly symbolic of caring, love, fun and family bonding.
2. Because they themselves are addicted to the junk.

If you want to help your child have the maximum chances of outliving you, of leading a healthy life to the full, you have to put their needs above either of these two considerations. I can help you reprioritise and deal with your own junk addiction, while helping your child.

FINAL WORDS

I hope this has given you some ideas about how to make a start with your child or teen when it comes to their eating habits.

I am keen to know what questions I have left unanswered.

I am keen to know what help you need in this area.

If you are interested in giving me feedback, please email me at [info {at} theshiftinside.com](mailto:info@theshiftinside.com) – and you never know, I might create something tailor-made for your needs!

Your coach

Harriet Morris



